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ISSUE

# DIABOLIQUE™

JAMES MCTEIGUE'S  
The **RAVEN**

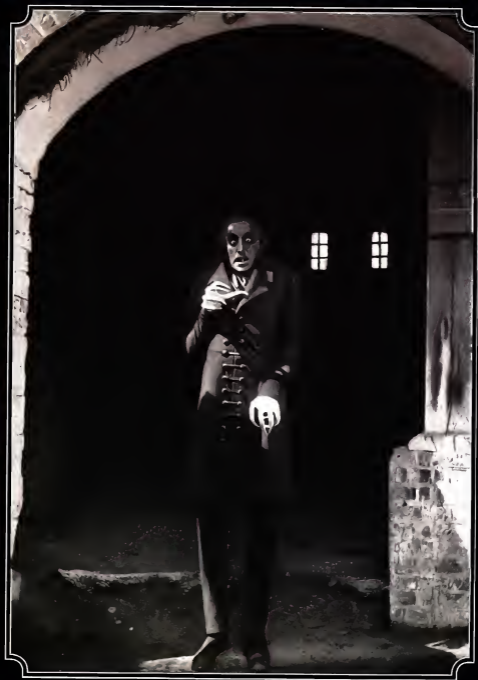
Jonathan Rigby on  
Christopher  
Lee at 90

The *Bram Stoker*  
**CENTENARY ISSUE**  
THE MAN WHO WROTE "DRACULA"

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# DIABOLIQUE

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**B**RAM STOKER'S DEATH at the age of 64 on 20 April 1912 came less than a week after the sinking of the *Titanic*. Both were 'made' in Ireland before venturing out to the wider world, and both left an indelible mark on the 20th century. The *Titanic* disaster resulted in a raft of changes in passenger shipping practices which make the whole experience today, much safer. It also became a shorthand for disaster, courage, fear, and God-like delusions. The oft quoted myth about how 'God himself could not sink this ship' brings me to mind of Peter Cushing's Baron Frankenstein and his desire to control life itself—you can picture him taunting the higher powers with an 'I created life, I am God' mentality.

Stoker meanwhile left the world with a less-immediate impact. His writing was secondary to a career as actor Henry Irving's manager, and it wouldn't really be until the 1930s that Stoker's creations took on a life of their own. For all that Stoker did write it is only one creation that remains in the popular consciousness—*DRACULA*. *Dracula* too is a god-like creature, taking lives, and rebirthing others through the strange possessive power of vampirism. It is thanks to *Dracula* that we continue to obsess with vampires in film, television, theatre, fiction and breakfast cereals! As this issue's writers reveal—there is much more to Stoker than *Dracula*.

Just a decade after Stoker's death, perhaps cinema's greatest incarnation of Stoker's vampire was born in the form of (Sir) Christopher Frank Carandini Lee. A prolific actor who has had about as many career revivals now as *his* *Dracula* had incarnations. Lee is, as our short tribute feature states, the last true icon of horror left from the golden era. His success as Stoker's creation has lingered long after he hung up the cape, and rather overshadowed a vibrant, varied career.

I've spent many an hour thrilled by Lee's onscreen turns, frightened, enticed and amused. His spot in Hammer's *The Resident* a couple of years ago, was one of the film's best elements. Not simply because Lee was part of the 'old' Hammer, but be-

cause he lent the role dignity and depth. There are soft, silent moments in that film that remind the viewer that Lee has always been able to dominate the screen simply by his presence. He's hardly in *Dracula*, and doesn't turn up till the half-way point in *Dracula—Prince of Darkness*, but he has impact that reverberates throughout the rest of the runtime. I've always been taken with his study of *The Mummy*—just watch what goes on in his eyes during the crucial sequences between him and Yvonne Furneaux, and tell me you don't feel his pain.

Lee himself has long voiced his admiration for Bram Stoker, and last November he was invited to Ireland by University College Dublin and given honorary life membership of the UCD Law Society on what would have been Stoker's 164th birthday. Trinity College Philosophical Society (which Stoker himself had been President of) awarded him the Bram Stoker Medal that same day. Regardless of the dubious merits of some of the *Dracula* films Lee has been involved in, he has served as an ambassador for the late Irishman for over five decades now, encouraging many to take up Stoker's books for the first time. Like so many others, I have Sir Christopher Lee to thank for contributing to my own interest. *Dracula* is a cracking tale, and can lead into a rich world of Victorian Gothic literature—itsself the backbone of any modern horror.

We're thrilled to be able to bring you this special Bram Stoker edition of *Diabolique*, and to have the support of the Bram Stoker estate during the production of this issue. Join the *Diabolique* team and charge your glasses in salute of two greats of horror—Mr. Bram Stoker, and Sir Christopher Lee.

Robert

The staff at *Diabolique Magazine* would like to thank Dacre C. Stoker and the Bram Stoker Estate for their assistance and support in producing this issue.

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# Lina Romay

## *Flesh for Fantasy*

(1954 - 2012)



**L**INA ROMAY, WHO died of cancer on 15 February, 2012, achieved a heady mix of fame, notoriety and longevity in her choice of career by becoming the muse, lover and eventually the wife of one of Spain and exploitation cinema's true legends—the prolific and irascible director Jess Franco. Franco has worked with many actresses over the course of the sixty or so years that he's been making films, but only two have become uniquely associated with Franco and his work. The first and arguably the more accomplished of the two, Soledad Miranda, who starred in some of Franco's most seminal works, including *Vampiros Lesbos* (1971) and *She Killed in Ecstasy* (1971), was tragically killed in a car crash in August, 1970, at the ridiculously young age of 27. A few months later Franco met Lina Romay, and so began one of the most enduring and endearing relations exploitation cinema has ever known.

Romay's arrival in Franco's universe was more than just a coincidence. Soledad Miranda, in all likelihood, would have moved on from Franco had she lived, as unlike Romay, Miranda had been an aspiring actress from childhood. Although she had been working with Franco on and off since she was seventeen, she also had small roles in more mainstream titles

like the western *100 Rifles* (1970) and was at the time of her death attracting attention from other producers and directors. Franco also turned forty in 1970 and was at the peak of his creative powers and for the next five years or so would continue, as he had for the previous decade, producing some of exploitation cinema's most memorable and important films. These would include *Tender and Perverse Emmanuelle* (1973), *Lorna... the Exorcist* (1974), *Virgin Among the Living Dead* (1973) and the extraordinary *Female Vampire* (1973). *Female Vampire* is also the film that more than any other was to establish Romay not just as Franco's muse and natural successor to Miranda, but as the embodiment of Franco's own sexual desire.

In *Female Vampire* (or *The Bare Breasted Countess* a, as it's also known), the film starts with Lina Romay emerging from a swirling fog, completely naked, aside from a black cape that billows out behind as she walks towards the camera, and a pair of knee-length black boots. She is completely at ease with her nudity. In this film Romay stamps her own identity onto the Franco brand and defines herself not as a substitute Miranda but as someone new and exciting in her own right. In *Female Vampire*, Franco's tale of a mute vampire Countess called Irina Karstein and played by Romay, the Countess is shown descending from her lair to take

the blood she needs to live. The Countess captivates and seduces a local man and takes his blood by biting off his penis while they have sex. The theme, despite its heady mix of Freud and pornography, is that in order to survive the Countess must kill, and the film successfully manages to portray both sadness and loss, coupled with a strong sense of the misery generated by a perpetual existence where anyone who gets close to the Countess will inevitably die, either directly by her hand (or mouth) or by the passing of time. This feeling of despair is helped by an incredibly powerful and melancholy music score by Daniel J. White, and as a result *Female Vampire* is one of Romay's and Franco's best films.

Franco followed up his striking, and seemingly gratuitous, use of Romay's body in several more memorable films from this period, including the sadistic and deliciously over-the-top *Exorcism* (1974) which he made the year after *Female Vampire*. In its opening scene, Romay is shown naked and bound to a wooden, X-shaped cross, her legs held wide open, waiting to be stabbed. In *Lorna the Exorcist* (1974) she plays an eighteen-year-old possessed girl whose vagina in one scene expels small but live sea-crabs. This was Romay all over, not a classical actress with a great vocal range *per se*, but a sensual young woman who sex-raw and at-times almost child-like sex-

uality perfectly mirrored Franco's own cavalier mix of the adult and the adolescent in both his filmmaking and his portrayal of women. Lina Romay was this, too, possessing the raw sexual need of a young woman embracing sex with the abandon that comes both from being in love and from the excitement of being lusted after and of reciprocating that lust back through the camera lens and into the mind of her lover.

When Franco first met Romay she was an art student and going out with Franco's then stills photographer, Ramón Ardid. Franco and Romay soon became lovers and Franco would separate from his then wife, Nicole Guettard, and devote himself to Romay. Further Franco reclaimed to sense in Romay a sense of the reincarnation of his former muse, Soledad Miranda. Now, for better or for worse, Franco had made his bed and Romay would be the woman lying in it.

Romay is praised and remembered, particularly in recent years, as a caring and devoted wife to Franco, yet the fact remains that for most Franco fans or casual viewers Romay was a quasi-porn actress whose totally uninhabited nature perfectly matched Franco's desire to expose as much of his new muse's flesh as possible. Yet to characterise Romay purely in sexual terms is to do her an injustice, for Romay was much more than an actress and performer who was comfortable

with being nude; she also had incredible screen presence, which coupled with her natural beauty, dark, hypnotic eyes and an almost confrontational pout, made her a true exploitation sex symbol, ranking alongside contemporaries like Brigitte Lahaie, Christina Lindberg, Marie Liljedahl and the UK's Mary Millington.

Romay while synonymous with Franco did occasionally work with other directors, most notably Erwin C. Dietrich, a Swiss producer of many Franco titles who also directed. In fact Romay could, had she wished, have expanded her career and experiences outside of the Franco universe. But she didn't, choosing instead to be faithful both to Franco the man and to Franco the director. Yet in *Rolls-Royce Baby* (1975), the film she made with Dietrich, it is interesting to see Romay looking magnificent and giving a tight and polished performance. In it she plays a hitchhiker abused by two truckers, who, having had their way with her, abandon her at the side of a road and keep her clothes. Haunted by this humiliating experience, Romay eventually becomes rich and buys a Rolls Royce which she uses to pick up men to use and abuse before moving on to the next one. However, regardless of the promise Romay showed under the guidance of another director she hardly ever made a non-Franco film again.

Franco and Romay were now fusing as people, as lovers, as creative talents and

becoming one entity. Conceiving films, co-writing, editing together, working on the music, and using the small budgets they were now offered to surreptitiously make two films on the back of the one commissioned. Yet as the seventies moved inextricably into the eighties and cinemas gave way to video, and in turn Franco's clout as a commercial director began to wane, so Franco and Romay became more and more a 'couple'. Devoted to each other, often finishing each other's sentences, each chain-smoking and each now one half of a creative whole. For Franco, Romay and her body were still as desirable as ever, even as the passing years inevitably took their toll on her physically. Franco would film her exactly as he had done all through his career. And while the interest and appreciation in Franco's later work was diminishing, so conversely the interest in his earlier work was growing and with it, Lina Romay's own status. So it is truly sad that when it is Jess Franco's turn to be properly honoured and appreciated by a new and much wider audience as he surely will be, his true muse, lover and companion will not be there to hold his hand and light up his cigarette.

by Nigel Wingrove





*The Raven* is cinema's latest adaptation of an Edgar Allen Poe creation, but in this case it is Edgar Allen Poe himself being adapted...



THE FILM IMAGINES the creator of American Goth's final days as a race against time, against a fiendish killer who has kidnapped Poe's (John Cusack) beloved Emily (Alice Eve) and is murdering people according to Poe's dark and macabre stories.

It's a wonderfully high-concept gimmick, reimagining Poe as a Gothic Sherlock Holmes and giving us a pulp Gothic period go at *Seven*, and it's hard not to get pulled into the fun [sounds like a reworking of *Theatre of Blood* to me, Ed.]. That being said, a gimmick is fine for trailers, but if it's going to sustain a whole film they've got to bring more to the table than the "author solves his own books' murders" schtick.

Sadly the film doesn't really, the only thing setting it apart from the glut of other serial killer films being, ironically enough, its setting. The production design is both suitably sumptuous and gothically grand, taking us through graveyards, opera houses, masked balls and Dickensian newspaper printing houses. But the violent and unnecessarily nasty murders play against the rest of the film's tone, and leave a bad taste in the mouth, being far too close to the *Saw* torture genre than is needed.

The film owes an obvious debt to the Hughes Brothers *From Hell*, a 2001 adaptation of the dark and haunting graphic novel by acclaimed writer Alan Moore. That film starred Johnny Depp, and one could almost see Depp in the role of Poe here, as the character follows in the line of sorrowful misfits that he's made such a career of playing. However, despite the similarities to Depp's usual madmen, the casting went through a wide assortment of actors before finding its lead in Cusack. At one point Ewan McGregor was attached, with Jeremy Renner co-starring alongside him to play the detective, Emmett Fields, but that twosome fell apart after Renner left to join Tom Cruise in *Mission Impossible 4*. Then Joaquin Phoenix was linked with the role, and his trademark brooding intensity may have worked well, but

he soon departed, too. Finally it was announced that Cusack had won the part of Poe in *The Raven*.

Cusack, possibly best-known for starring in comedies, may not be the most obvious choice for this kind of role, but then again, he's always shown a keen intelligence in anything he's cast in, from action fun such as *Con Air* to dark thrillers like *Identity*. He's a good choice, nailing Poe's eccentricities, deep melancholy and quick wit. He has great fun in the opening scene, as the drunken and destitute writer quickly establishes his huge ego and way with words, but again the film never does anything more with Poe than this, other than to briefly touch upon the sadness which is said to have followed him his whole life. It's Jack Sparrow by way of Edgar Allen Poe, and it's frustrating to see such an interesting life reduced to such a lazy interpretation.

The director James McTeigue is a proven visual stylist thanks to his work with the Wachowskis on the *Matrix* films and *Speed Racer*, and he quickly graduated to director with his surprisingly good debut *V for Vendetta*. That film proved he could juggle cinematic style with interesting ideas under the surface, although his follow-up, *Ninja Assassin*, was nothing more than a visually beautiful and spiritually empty action film that often felt like it spliced in episodes of *CSI* at random. The greatest weakness of that film, carried on to this one, is McTeigue's use (or to be more accurate overuse) of terribly fake CGI blood that slops all over the screen and, frankly, just looks awful. He should really just invest in a few gallons of Karo Syrup, food coloring and put-upon assistant directors to stage his murders; it'd look better.

Dodgy effects aside, McTeigue relies on the film's gimmick to carry it, and it can't. He doesn't provide us with enough material and red herrings to give us an interesting whodunit, instead relying on the odd set-piece to keep us amused when he really should have trusted in Cusack's turn as Poe to keep us engaged. Cusack manages to give Poe a decent amount of depth with the material he's given, but it's

tragic to see such a complex and fascinating person such as Poe wasted like this, simplified into a drunk with a good vocabulary and a penchant for poetry. Fans of the man are likely to be unhappy. The film could have really just slung any well-known Gothic writer in and it's likely they would have been portrayed just the same.

Alice Eve is unexpectedly good as Poe's paramour, Emily, although she doesn't get much to do other than spend most of the film in a coffin. Their relationship does give the film its beating heart, but it's doubtful whether they'll go down in history as one of the screen's greatest tragic couples. Luke Evan does his usual solid supporting actor bit as Detective Emmett Fields, but he's far from memorable. I'm of the opinion that Brendan Gleeson is one of those actors that is able to lift any film he's involved in, and that continues here, although again he's not given much to do as Emily's disapproving father, except bicker amusingly with Cusack.

Written by Ben Livingston and Hannah Shakespeare, this long-gestating project is again more like "*Seven* lite" than a dark, gripping thriller. The whodunit aspect is largely ignored except for one well-written scene towards the end, going behind the killer's motivations. The biggest problem is the film refuses to gel, it's neither an old-fashioned whodunit nor a twisted police procedural, and it wastes the potential it has in using such a fantastic real life figure like Poe.

But if you're in the mood for a film that plays like a mash-up of *Seven*, *From Hell* and *Sleepy Hollow* you could do worse. If you feel like seeing cinematic adaptations of Poe at his finest, try Roger Corman's beautiful '60s versions of *The House of Usher*, *The Pit and The Pendulum*, *The Masque of Red Death* or indeed *The Raven*, all starring Vincent Price.

by Aidan Largey





## THE LAST HORROR ICON

To celebrate Sir Christopher Lee's 90th birthday on 27 May 2012, Jonathan Rigby – author of *Christopher Lee: An Authorised Screen History* – offers a personal reminiscence of horror cinema's last surviving icon.

IT WAS FRIDAY 15 March 1974 and London Weekend Television were due to show *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*. Naturally, I was desperate to see it. To accommodate me, my father inaugurated an unusual ritual that, over the coming months, enabled a horror-hungry 11-year-old to see a whole host of grisly shockers.

Here's how it went. Off to bed I'd go at 7.00 pm. Then at 10.30, as *News at Ten* drew to a close, I'd be woken up in order to enjoy a healthy dose of Gothic horror. Then, round about 12.15, I'd go back to bed again. Simple, really.

Anyway, *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* made an immediate and profound impact on me. A bloodied body swinging from a church bell in the pre-credits sequence. An arduous ascent to an untenanted castle in the teeth of an electrical storm. A dead but perfectly preserved aristocrat discovered under a sheet of mountain ice. The vampire's providential resurrection, followed by the tainted eroticism of his undead visits to a local maiden. An absolutely staggering sequence in which the young hero slammed a king-size stake into the monster's heart—a procedure that proved shockingly ineffectual. Then the literally cliff-hanging histrionics of the fiend's vertiginous plunge onto an impaling gold crucifix.

In the midst of all this, I was well aware of the enveloping atmosphere and, more than that, the fundamental contest between the forces of Good and Evil. I was also introduced, in the first few minutes of the film, to the concept of continuity errors—when my father cheerfully pointed out the 'now you see it now you don't' behaviour of a discarded bicycle.

But more important than any of this was the fiend himself. Who was this mag-

isterial actor who so perfectly embodied the burning-eyed Demon Lover of Gothic literature? This man whose sheer physical presence irradiated from the screen as rivetingly as the bloodshot eyes with which he hypnotised his not-quite-unwilling victims? This actor whose performance in those staking and impalement sequences struck me then (and still strike me now) as being among the most astounding displays of purely physical acting I'd ever seen? Who was this definitive *Dracula*?

Well, I knew perfectly well who it was, of course. In the mid-1970s, what self-respecting film fan *didn't* know the grimly impressive figure of Christopher Lee? Among other things, he'd been the *Dracula* of choice to an entire generation ever since 1958. So I knew who he was all right, but there was nevertheless plenty about him that I *didn't* know.

I didn't know, for example, that his mortal writhing in those climactic scenes of *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* were all the more astonishing given that he had recently developed a severe back problem



Christopher Lee is impaled on the church cross. *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*, (1968)



**By a strange quirk, the staking scene—one he strongly disapproved of—was filmed on his 46th birthday.**

when the film was made. (Back in 1968. To a young boy in 1974 that seemed like prehistory.) I didn't know that the staking scene was one he strongly disapproved of, on the grounds that it monkeyed around with established vampire lore—which makes the hair-raising conviction he brought to the sequence seem even more remarkable. Nor did I know that, by a strange quirk, the scene was filmed on his 46th birthday. I'm not sure I even knew that the luridly delicious Hammer horror films that had made his name were produced just down the road from where I lived (in Windsor). Finally, I didn't have the slightest idea that Lee's latest *Dracula* outing for Hammer, *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*—which had recently gone on release with a peskily deterrent 'X' rating—would prove to be his last.

Inevitably I wanted to know more, so when I spotted a lavishly laminated gatefold LP in WH Smith that Easter—emblazoned on it: *Hammer City Records Presents DRACULA with Christopher Lee*—I snapped it up without a second thought. Via repeated listens, Lee's brilliantly inflected vocal performance on this rather peculiar record sank deep into my brain; it still packs a punch today.



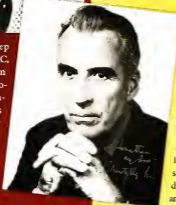


The next step was to join the CLIC, a snappy acronym for the Christopher Lee International Club. It was run at the time by a charming lady in Sussex called Dorene Hazell, and from her I duly received the cut-and-paste foolscap fan club bulletins that contained a wealth of information on the great man. They even included matte photos (in black and white) that were painstakingly glued in by hand to the little rectangular spaces reserved for them. I also received a signed 10 x 8, in which the beaming Lee could be seen wearing the eye-catching hound's tooth sports jacket from which he seemed to be inseparable in that period.

Yet for some unaccountable reason I didn't have the gumption to attend the fan club's conventions, held annually at the Kenilworth Hotel on Great Russell Street. I had to content myself with the photos of these events that subsequently appeared in the newsletters, showing Lee, dressed of course in that ubiquitous hound's tooth jacket, talking with fans and graciously signing their photos for them. I also got to read the gushing effusions of fellow enthusiasts, saying what a gent he was and (in the case of the club's extremely strong

female contingent) how weak at the knees they all became in his charismatic presence. No doubt about it, at the age of 52 Lee was an aristocratically handsome fellow and very much in his prime.

As a result of my unwillingness to attend fan conventions, I only got to meet the man—and then only briefly—in February 1987. By this time he'd been out to Hollywood for a nine-year spell and had not long returned. For my part, I'd recently enrolled at the Central School of Speech and Drama; indeed, I had

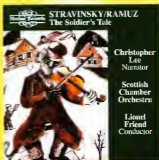


to duck out of a rehearsal of *The Seagull* in order to catch his appearance at Tower Records in Piccadilly. He was signing copies of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*, a CD he'd recently recorded, and when I told him I was training for the stage he muttered darkly about the paramount importance of an actor retaining faith

in himself at all times.

By this point his advice was of value to me because I'd acquired a more mature understanding of the way he, and actors generally, worked. His ambivalent feelings regarding the roles that made him

**His ambivalent feelings regarding the roles that made him famous had become all too plain in recent interviews.**



famous had become all too plain in recent interviews and, though they were perplexing to the horror fan in me, they were beginning to make some kind of sense to the aspiring actor.

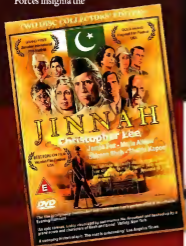
Fast-forward to June 1999. A fledgling publishing company called Reynolds & Hearn has just agreed to handle a book of mine called *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema*, a book that owed its inception to that viewing of *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* a quarter-century earlier. And, in pretty much the same breath as committing to *English Gothic*, Reynolds & Hearn commissioned me to write another book. A book about—you guessed it—Christopher Lee.

I was aware that Lee's career was not only a massive one, and positively Byzantine in its complexity, but that it had attracted correspondingly massive accretions of misinformation over the years. My task was to set the record straight as far as possible, so I set to work at once. The mass of research involved meant that I didn't properly start writing till nearly 12 months later. Around the same time, Reynolds & Hearn succeeded in bringing Lee himself on board. Thus it was that on Thursday 3 May 2000 I headed for Belgravia to have my first proper audience with the man himself.

This turned out to be the first of many such meetings, meetings that were rapidly relocated to a nearby hotel to Lee's own flat, where his copious scrapbooks and other memorabilia were more readily accessible. The first part of the book to be written focused, for some reason, on his Fu Manchu films of the

mid-1960s, material that would eventually constitute Part Five of the finished volume. Lee read the typescript of this and all the other chapters with avid interest, making very few interventions and then only to fine-tune some of the details.

Marcus Hearn accompanied me on several of these missions, and quite often they involved us sitting cross-legged on the floor, sorting through a sea of curling film stills while the 78-year-old Lee held court from his armchair. He was invaluable. Showing no trace of the rather monolithic hauteur that fans thought characteristic of him by this time, he revealed instead a humorous and playful side to his personality. This might involve glasses of aquavit all round on one day, a viewing of his collection of Special Forces insignia the



next, or an inspection of his Ian Fleming first editions (the full set) the day after that. So, amid all the fact-finding, each one of these encounters was chock-full of laughter and drollery.

Most valuable of all, we had access to all the souvenirs he'd amassed during his long career; we looked at all of it agog. We even got to see outré peculiarities like the leather raincoat he bought in Hamburg while filming *The Treasure of San Teresa* in 1959; as well as using it in that film, he wore it again in the 1982 TV movie *Massarati and the Brain*. And





there it was, still immaculately preserved in his wardrobe at the turn of the century.

My deadline for the book was 1 December. I overshot this by a few weeks but *Christopher Lee: The Authorised Screen History* nevertheless came out in time for its launch date of 28 February 2001. On that day a special event at the Barbican Cinema included a screening of Lee's rarely seen 1997 film *Jinnah* and an on-stage interview. This was very relaxing for me, because in the course of an hour or so I only had to ask him about three or four questions; his answers to them amply filled out the time slot. Doves of fans had turned out for the event, so Lee and I signed a dizzying number of books before

**He brought a demonic intensity to all his key roles, investing them with a dominating physical presence, a richly textured voice and—a frequently forgotten detail, this—an amazing mastery of movement and mime.**

the night was out. The same was true of several similar events later in the year, for one of which we went up to Nottingham.

The book was well received, which was nice, but I quickly found that my attempts to correct misinformation weren't necessarily welcome. The human impulse to 'print the legend' rather than the truth came into play here. At least one internet commentator pointed out how good the book was, noting simultaneously that it was a worthy tribute to a man who had made over 350 films. My filmography, of course, made it abundantly clear that this was a greatly inflated figure. To no avail, apparently.

Even so, there's no doubt that Lee is an extraordinarily prolific performer, having enjoyed a career whose international scope exceeds that of any other actor. On top of this, his work has embraced almost all the phases of popular filmmaking—breezy British farce and 'stiff upper lip' derring-do in the 1950s, the dazzling efflorescence of Hammer horror at the end of that decade, so-called 'krimis' in West Germany, lurid Gothics in Italy, a James Bond picture, a Walt Disney picture, all-star 1970s blockbusters, straight-to-video fodder in the 1980s, glossy TV movies and mini-series in the 1990s and, in the 21st century, a remarkable Indian *Summer in the Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* franchises. These latter, according to a *Daily Telegraph* critic, turned him into 'the Grand Vizier of Blockbusterdom'.

In the course of all this, the directors Lee has worked with range from cult figures like Robert Siodmak, Nicholas Ray, Edgar Ulmer, Orson Welles, Dick Lester, Jesús Franco, Alejandro Jodorowsky and Hammer supremo Terence Fisher to Raoul Walsh, John Huston, Billy Wilder, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Peter Jackson, Tim Burton and (most recently) Martin Scorsese.

Lee's baleful charisma stamped him early on as one of the cinema's world-class villains, playing characters dubbed by a French admirer (in a phrase he treasures) 'héros maléfiques'. Taking a leaf from the book of his early hero Conrad Veidt, he brought a demonic intensity to



all his key roles, investing them with a dominating physical presence, a richly textured voice and—a frequently forgotten detail, this—an amazing mastery of movement and mime. The latter talent was seen in abundance in the two Hammer horrors that first put him on the map. In *The Curse of Frankenstein*, just look at the deeply pathetic attempts made by the un-coordinated Creature to respond to Frankenstein's simple command of 'Sit down!' And in *Dracula*, the Count's dislocated writhings in a shaft of cleansing sunlight make the final special effects sequence—in which the vampire's dissolving head is seen resting on his left boot!—seem entirely plausible.

These films ushered in what Lee has jadedly called his Graveyard Period, and certainly there was a time in the 1960s when hard-won stardom seemed to bring with it a procession of boringly similar roles in boringly similar films. As a result, Lee's performances in some of these projects seem a trifle inflexible, recalling the very earliest days of his career in the 1940s. This inflexibility was an asset to his glacially inscrutable Fu Manchu, but else-

where it pointed up a curious irony—the period that consolidated Lee's international stardom also temporarily eclipsed the versatility and vulnerability he'd perfected in the 1950s.

This isn't a problem, however. For a start, more imaginative casting kicked in during the 1970s, bringing the old humour and flexibility roaring back with a vengeance. On top of that, there are plenty of relishable performances elsewhere in his portfolio—a portfolio that he began compiling on his professional debut in the BBC magazine programme *Kaleidoscope*, way back in December 1946.

Here, then, are some of my personal favourites, a baker's dozen chosen more or less at random.

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### The Curse of Frankenstein

Fifty-odd years later, this remains a seriously under-rated performance. Just as Peter Cushing rethought Frankenstein as a dandified Machiavel, so Lee reconceived the Creature as a brain-damaged child, a marionette with no will of its own.

And the results are pitiful to behold.

### A Tale of Two Cities

Lee got this one in 1957, in the wake of his *Curse of Frankenstein* celebrity, and in it he's visibly limbering up for his first go at *Dracula*, which was shot just a few months later. His odious Marquis St Evrémonte is a landed sociopath who really means business.

### The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll

After *Dracula*, lots of sleazy characters came Lee's way (notably his strip club proprietor in the mind-boggling *Beat Girl*), but the feckless upper-class sponger he plays here gave him a perfect opportunity to wipe the floor with the film's nominal star, Paul Massie.

### Les Mains d'Orlac

More floor-wiping followed immediately, this time with stolid leading man Mel Ferrer. Lee is very charming (and loathsome) in this one. It was filmed in 1960 in both French and English versions; catch the French one, in which Lee's deranged blackmailer is even fruitier.

### The Devil-Ship Pirates

Lee had cut his teeth (and nearly severed a finger) in 1950s swashbucklers like *The Crimson Pirate* and *The Dark Avenger*. In the following decade, courtesy of Hammer, he graduated to star billing in similar projects. His Captain Robeles in this 1963 adventure counts as a master-class in sneering, black-hearted villainy.

### Dr Terror's House of Horrors

Lee made this one in 1964 and in it he seemed to be playing up to his slightly stuffy public image. Yet he subverts it brilliantly, adding lovely touches of suppressed hysteria to an impossibly conceited art critic who is assailed by a sentient severed hand.

### The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes

Coming at the end of his Graveyard Period (1969), Lee was especially grateful for this one. A supremely civilised cameo

in a supremely beautiful film. His Mycroft Holmes is unusually slender but displays an urbane, waspish sense of humour not unlike Lee's own. It also compensates for the not terribly good films in which he played Sherlock.

### The Man with the Golden Gun

The role of Francisco Scaramanga was originally mooted for Jack Palance, but happily it went instead to Lee, who in 1974 made Scaramanga into a sweetly reasonable but utterly deadly anti-Bond. Is Lee's Scaramanga the best of all Bond villains? He has my vote.

### To the Devil a Daughter

Lee was on the brink of decamping to Hollywood when he made this one for the ailing Hammer in late 1975. It's an under-rated film (not least by Lee himself), but it exudes a genuine whiff of evil, much enhanced by Lee's utterly chilling performance as a lapsed priest.

### House of the Long Shadows

Maybe this film (made in the autumn of 1982) is no great shakes, and undoubtedly it was completely out of step with contemporary horrors. But it gave Lee an invaluable opportunity to interact one last time with his old confreres Peter Cushing and Vincent Price. And they're cast as brothers. How appropriate.

### Treasure Island

Aimed at US cable but released theatrically over here, this 1989 extravaganza sees Lee turning the familiar figure of Blind Pew into nothing less than a human embodiment of the Grim Reaper. 'Makes Freddy Krueger look like Santa Claus,' noted one reviewer of this brief but fantastic performance.

### The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

Lee first went to New Zealand for Tolkien purposes in January 2000, and was shooting extra bits and bobs for this third film as late as summer 2003. Notoriously, Peter Jackson then deleted Lee's megalomaniac Saruman from the cinema

release. Watch Lee's sulphurically impressive death scene in the DVD version and weep for the directorial vandalism.

### Greyfriars Bobby

I really like this one, a pleasant (albeit overlooked) family film made in 2004 in which Lee's cameo as the Lord Provost brings proceedings to a graceful and genuinely moving conclusion. When Lee confers 'the freedom of the City of Edinburgh' on a tiny West Highland terrier, it's the emotional fulcrum of the entire film.

• • •

Just 13 choices. Absurd. But one has to draw the line somewhere.

Christopher Lee remains an extraordinary actor in that he continues to appear in up-to-the-minute films while retaining indelible links with cinema's distant past. Fate cast him in the sepulchral mould of his idol, Conrad Veidt, while conferring on him the mantle previously worn by his friend Boris Karloff. But Lee brought to that mantle a sinister glamour and monumental presence that are unique. A whole generation of Hollywood directors are well aware of this fact, having grown up with his work. Indeed, in latter years they helped him extend that work into the 1990s and beyond. But it's pretty certain he would have done so in any case, without their help. For his staggering number of credits bears witness not only to a man in demand, but to a

man easily bored by inactivity, a workaholic.

And, amazingly, this remains true as he reaches the venerable age of 90.

Here's to him!

by Jonathan Rigby



# CASTING SHADOWS

## Stoker's DRACULA On Screen

Legend says that a vampire must be invited into a house by its owner. Once welcomed, he may come and go as he pleases.



**D**RACULA WAS INVITED into my home in the early 1970s. I had no say in the matter, as I was only around six or seven years

old and had begged to stay up late to watch Friday night's *Appointment with Fear* movie. It was *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), starring Christopher Lee. As I recall through the fog of memory, I eventually saw the film from behind the sofa. But I wasn't fazed. I promised myself to sit up every Friday night thereafter and see all the Amicus and Hammer offerings that my little heart could stand. And I did.

Dracula himself, I later discovered, had been invited into the world in the pages of a novel of the same name by the author Bram Stoker. It took me years to actually get around to reading the book. My reading habits were happily confined to comic books, particularly Marvel comics, and they already had a pretty cool series running with the Marv Wolfman and

Gene Colan epic *Tomb of Dracula*. I had seen Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney and John Carradine interpret the role on BBC's celebrated weekly double-bills. I eventually bought my copy of the novel and read it straight through in one sitting in the mid-eighties.

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, marks the centenary of Bram Stoker's death. The novel *Dracula* did only moderate business in his lifetime but has never been out of print and is certainly the benchmark against which all other vampire novels are measured. Bram himself, if biographer Daniel Farson is to be believed, felt that his own life had been one of abject failure. He never lived long enough to see his work portrayed successfully

on stage. He had staged his own adaptation, *Dracula or The Undead*, at the Lyceum Theatre, as a means to copyrighting the work. His confidence must have been shattered when his employer—and wish-list actor to play the Count—Sir Henry Irving, condemned the piece as "dreadful"



## Stoker's Dracula

**C**OUNT DRACULA RARELY appears in the novel, and his greatest scenes are in the opening four chapters as he terrorizes the young solicitor Jonathan Harker. Through his diary, Jonathan informs the reader that Dracula is a courteous host, who is immensely strong, is seen only at night, and spends most of his time outside the castle clinging to the wall like a gigantic lizard. He is seeking to own a house in England and seals the deal for a place in Purfleet called Carfax. Harker is locked inside the castle and is seduced by three strange women who "go on their knees" and "giggle coquettishly." The Count interrupts this tableau and hurls the girl to the ground like a depraved stepfather, with the words: "This man is mine! When I am done with him, you may kiss him at your will!"

When the girl asks, "Are we to have nothing tonight?" the Count points to a large bag from which a small child can be heard whimpering. Later, Harker discovers that the Count sleeps in a crypt below the castle and becomes younger as he imbibes more blood.

When the action of the novel moves to London, we only hear of the Count's



My first thought on closing the book was disappointment. I was confused because the book didn't really sound like any of the films I'd witnessed; and the Marvel comic, it turned out, was probably the closest in portraying the Count's selfish and homicidal character. I began to collect movie books and read articles on Christopher Lee and how he thought that the stories he acted out tended to stray further and further away from Stoker's original concept, and I was inclined to agree with him. I came to the conclusion that film and book are altogether different mediums by which to tell stories—the comic book being a halfway juncture between the two worlds.





activities in the third person, as Lucy Westenra can only remember bats, red eyes and an eerily swirling mist during her lengthy seduction. Comedy characters with deplorable accents—Stoker loved to experiment with dialogue—each relate their own story of this standoffish gentleman with a hooked nose, dressed in black. Mina Murray (Harker) is the only one to vividly describe the Count's advances:

Beside the bed, as if he had stepped out of the mist, or rather as if the mist had turned into his figure, for it had entirely disappeared, stood a tall, thin man, all in black. I knew him at once from the description of the others. The waxen face, the high aquiline nose, on which the light fell in a thin white line, the parted red lips, with the sharp white teeth showing between ...

[and] the red scar on his forehead where Jonathan had struck him. ... I was bewildered, and strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim. And oh, my God, my God, pity me! He placed his reeking lips upon my throat!

As the vampire hunters, headed by Professor Van Helsing, close in on the Count, we see his personality broken down into egotistical boasts:

You think to baffle me, you with your pale faces all in a row like sheep in a butcher's. You shall be sorry yet, each one of you! You think you have left me without a place to rest, but I have more. My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already. And through



them you and others shall yet be mine, my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed! Bahl!

Dracula never gets to meet the learned professor in the novel and might be unimpressed with many of the encounters seen between them on film. The respectful snarls hurled at Van Helsing ("You are a wise man Professor, for one who has not yet lived a single lifetime!") are lifted from the Hamilton Deane stage play that would become the blueprint for several major treatments of the novel on the screen.

Gustav von Wangenheim as Hutter



Graf Orlok's history is recorded in a book that is passed between the cast like a frightening pamphlet of Nazi propaganda.

### Stoker's Demon on Film

**N**OSFERATU (1922) was written by Henrik Galeen for Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau and his Prana film company. Murnau had had success with *Der Janos Kopf* (1921)—an unofficial take on R.L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*—and proceeded on the same lines with Stoker's *Dracula*. Galeen's script changed the major locations of Transylvania and London to Germany and Bremen and, omitting altogether the impotent background characters of Arthur Holmwood and Quincy Morris, changed the names of the lead characters. Count Dracula became Graf Orlok, Professor Van Helsing became Professor Bulwer, Jonathan Harker became Hutter and Renfield shared his role with that of Mr Hawkins and was renamed Knock. The characters Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray/Harker were also whittled down into the one persona, that of Hutter's wife, Ellen.





When Murnau filmed *Nosferatu*, he was filming in a different world from that we know today. He and his contemporaries, Fritz Lang and Paul Leni amongst others, were making movies that mirrored their times and made contemporary headlines a kind of entertainment for the masses. Before the German Expressionist wave, horror movies had been limited to short films of trains roaring at breakneck speed towards the audience. When, in the late twenties, *Nosferatu* was hidden to prevent its destruction, its protectors perhaps didn't have film preservation on their minds. Was preserving the film's anti-Nazi message as a warning to future generations the real motive?

Murnau hammers home his fears



in perhaps the greatest version of Stoker's tale. Graf Orlok (Schreck) is a disgusting pestilence that reaches out and destroys everything in its path. He has no moral standing and cannot be reasoned with. He has no interest in the making of new acolytes, taking blood simply as a form of survival. He sends out hypnotic commands across great oceans. His history is recorded in the book *Of Vampires, Terrible Ghosts, Magic and the Seven Deadly Sins*, which claims *Nosferatu* is spawned from "the seed of Belial." This book is passed between the cast like a frightening pamphlet of Nazi propaganda. Death is coming and he cannot be stopped.

Even the casting of *Nosferatu* hints at Murnau's real reason for making the film. Gustav von Wangenheim, who plays



Hutter, was a Nazi sympathizer and gets his comeuppance in the movie when his wife, Ellen (Greta Schroeder), his whole life, is murdered in her attempts to destroy the harbinger of death. As if anticipating rising Nazism, Alexander Granach's Knock dances around his cell as he awaits great change with the coming of the Master.

Jewish actor John Gottowt, who played Professor Bulwer (and was also cousin to scriptwriter Henrik Galeen) would be murdered by the Nazis in 1942. In the movie, his professor is just as powerless, as Murnau omits any reference to the religious trappings spoken about by Van Helsing in *Dracula*, the only crosses on show being drawn in white chalk on the doors of the dead. A screening of the 2010 restoration at the Leeds Film Festival received rapt applause from audiences, again testifying to the legacy of Murnau and Schreck and proving that Graf Orlok is simply the Count who refuses to lie down.

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Béla Ferenc Dezső Blaskó, better known as Bela Lugosi, would become the

Count Dracula for millions of moviegoers, helped partly by Universal's media machine. The company would copyright the name "Dracula," and the Hungarian ex-patriot would go to his grave with the spectre of Dracula by his side. As an accurate depiction of the novel, the 1931 film is very questionable. It was based on John L. Balderston's Americanized 1927 treatment of the 1924 stage play by Hamilton Deane. This hampered the film terribly, and its stage bound origins are evident in almost every frame as dialogue lazily points out many of the novel's highlights, and is delivered by a bewildered-looking cast. Renfield's character is spliced with that of Jonathan Harker, leaving the latter very underused indeed. Dracula himself is limited to being a B-movie bad guy, having no romantic interest in Lucy, but coveting her because of her similar interest in all things morbid. She finds the Count fascinating, as he does himself, and becomes his first dish. When the script speaks of the famous marks on the throat, we never see them, nor do we witness the staking of the "bloofer lady," one of the major highlights of the novel. The Count is also limited to a dreary off-

screen moan when staked by Van Helsing—an accurate-looking and speaking Edward Van Sloan—and his egotistical rants are removed from the script altogether. On viewing it today, one can only marvel at the tremendous set designs and try to imagine sitting in a darkened movie theatre for the first screening as Bela Lugosi utters that first immortal line: "I—am—Dracula!"

All the downsides inherent in the American version were made even more conspicuous when, in 1992, fans were treated to the release on VHS of Universal's Spanish-language production of *Dracula*, starring Carlos Villarias (billed as Carlos Villar) and Lupita Tovar. Filmed on the same sets as the Tod Browning "blockbuster," this film adheres largely to the original screenplay. Many of the high-lights of the Lugosi film are copied and elaborated upon by a cast and crew that understand and enjoy the material. With a few deft script changes, however, we lose the Dwight Frye's ramblings of ambiguous loyalty, and Dr Seward becomes the father of one of Dracula's conquests rather than being relegated to the role of a dithering old man, as was Herbert Buntson's fate in Browning's parallel production. Villarias's maniacal and homicidal sociopath gleefully delivers lines based on Stoker's narrative and looks enough like Bela Lugosi—the Master—that we can forgive the makers for using footage of Lugosi in the long shots. A moving camera, and creaks added to opening doors and coffin lids give atmosphere to the whole proceedings. Genuinely creepy, if a little overlong, the Spanish-language *Dracula* is the first real understanding of the character of Stoker's monster on film.

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The 1953 film *Drakula Istanbul*, (*Dracula in Istanbul*), starring Atif Kapitan, went unseen for years in the West, as it was never released theatrically, but the film is now available worldwide on DVD. While being based partly on the 1928 novel *The Impaling Voivode*, by Ali Rıza Seyfi, the film is also remarkably true to Stoker's novel, incorporating all its major

Bela Lugosi as Dracula, in the 1931 Broadway production.





## Christopher Lee's Count Dracula is a charming aristocrat given to bouts of tigerish ferocity.

plot-points. It is the first movie to hint of Dracula's origins as a bloodthirsty tyrant. The demon rampages through modern-day Istanbul in a film that breaks many censorship taboos of the period. Kaptan's Dracula has a bride built like a Stepford wife, who caresses the young lawyer in the castle, causing the Count to lament that she made him "miss the best opportunity I've had in years!"

Another first shows the Count scaling his castle wall and being savagely attacked by his guest as he reposes in his very clean and tidy crypt. The heroine is played by Annie Ball, who moonlights as a burlesque dancer and performs three pulse-racing numbers in very revealing costumes. The Count insists that she will perform a final private lap dance

for him before he puts the bite on her. I believe that Bram Stoker himself would have applauded this competent version of his novel, which works on the same undemanding but thrilling level of, say, *Son of Dracula* (1943) or *The Return of Dracula* (1957).

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The mid-1950s were dark days for the Lord of the Undead, as he was pushed aside to make way for scientifically themed potboilers such as *Not of This Earth* (1955), with Paul Birch, and *The Vampire* (1957), starring John Beale. Bela Lugosi would star in *Old Mother Riley Meets the Vampire* (1952) as a disillusioned scientist who gets his comeuppance at the hands of Arthur Lucan's vaudeville

comedian while trying to convince everyone that he is a vampire. In August 1956, Lugosi died from problems stemming from a 20-year drug and alcohol addiction and was buried—at his family's request—wearing one of his Dracula capes. His departure left the field wide open for a more modern reworking of the classic tale.

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In 1957, Christopher Lee donned the cape for the first full-colour Dracula movie, from the small British studio Hammer Films. *Dracula* (aka *Horror of Dracula*) was released to worldwide success in 1958. Jimmy Sangster fashioned his script using highlights from the novel and incorporating Stoker's theme of a "Boy's

LEFT: Crowds line up in front of London's Gaumont Theatre for Hammer's *Dracula* (1958)  
 BELOW: Christopher Lee strikes a menacing pose in *Dracula Has Risen From the Grave* (1968)



Own" adventure. Having only a bare minimum of screen time, Christopher Lee is the first actor to approach the Count on Stoker's terms. He is the charming aristocrat given to bouts of tigerish ferocity and holds a blatant disregard for the human race. He becomes a jealous husband as his first rampage begins, when Jonathan Harker pins Dracula's wayward bride to her coffin with a wooden stake.

Sangster's omission of all reference to Dracula's violent history—Universal is accused of a similar lack of foresight in their franchise—drastically limited Dracula's transference from film to film, turning the character into a bogeyman who jumps out of the shadows every so often to add impact to some pretty mediocre films. All of the Hammer Dracula movies focus on a blind revenge theme. *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1969) echoes the book in sitting the Count squarely in Victorian

London for the first time in a Hammer film. It is a pity that the writer, Anthony Hinds, chose to keep the revenge motif, whereby Dracula avenges the death of his servant, rather than follow up the opportunities available.

*Taste* was the final movie in Hammer's original series. In the next film, *The Scars of Dracula*, Dracula is revived after a telepathic bat drips blood onto his corpse. Once revived, he plays out the scenes of the first four chapters of the novel as a genteel host to a midnight visitor (Christopher Matthews). Some inconsistencies with the previous Hammer Dracula films (such as the reappearance of the servant, Klove, who appeared to have died in *Dracula, Prince of Darkness*), along with the gratuitous sex, bawdy humour and unrestrained gore made it the worst in the series. Lee's final Dracula films for Hammer tried a change of pace by reviving him in modern-day Chelsea (*Dracula AD* 1972), and later as a property speculator about to unleash Armageddon (*The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, 1973). These films benefited immensely from the reappearance of Peter Cushing as the grandson of the original Van Helsing, and his final stand-offs with Dracula have rocketed these films to the top of the cult lists.

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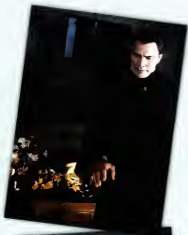
Between *Taste* and *Scars*, Christo-



Anouska Hempel in *Scars of Dracula* (1970)



**Palance's interpretation remains the last to truly reflect the bloodthirsty nature of Stoker's creation.**



pher Lee found the time to star as the Count of the original author's imagination, in a film that advertised an accurate depiction of Stoker's timeless tale of the macabre. *El Conde Dracula* (*Bram Stoker's Count Dracula*, 1970) is a wasted opportunity. Five scriptwriters each wrote their own section of Stoker's story and then seemingly glue the finished screenplay together with wallpaper paste. This makes for a hilarious hour and thirty-eight minute movie as the edit takes us on a different excursion every 10 or 15 minutes without any explanations concerning what has gone before. Lee physically resembles Stoker's monster to an uncanny degree, but is very camera-conscious in many scenes, due to the lack of any visible direction. Klaus Kinski, as Renfield, steals the film by default because he needs no one to act with and delivers a very disturbing look into a deranged mind whilst seeming to be in a totally different film to the rest of the cast. Christopher Lee has defended Jess Franco's reputation for years on his handling of this film, nevertheless, and puts it as his own personal favourite of *Dracula* movies.

• • •

Jack Palance would try his hand as the Count in Dan Curtis' TV movie *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1973) and gives possibly

the closest approximation of the vampire count. The film falls short as it tries to identify *Dracula* as the 15<sup>th</sup>-century warrior Vlad Tepesh. Many scenes are reminiscent of Curtis's earlier TV movie success *The Night Stalker*, but the restrictions placed on the material by TV standards downplay the blood-letting in favour of the hokey "lost love" motif that has ruined many horror movies since its inception in Universal's *The Mummy* (1932). Nevertheless, Palance's interpretation of *Dracula* remains the last to truly reflect the bloodthirsty nature of Stoker's creation. The next major portrayal, by Frank Langella, would set a trend for more romantic interpretation of *Dracula* on film.

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In 1977, the John Balderston play had been revived on Broadway to incredible success, and it was time for Universal studios to take up the reins and reshoot the movie. Frank Langella brought out the underlying love interest that the ladies had known existed all along. His Count shirks the very idea of being a historical warrior and becomes a centuries-old Valantino, seducing everything that moves, and has possibly the highest ego of any of the screen incarnations. He has no brides wasting away in his cellars, as he believes that he can have any woman that

Frank Langella at Carfax Abbey, *Dracula* (1979)



The *Dracula* production team. Standing, left to right: Kate Nelligan, John Badham, and Teddy Turner. Sitting, left to right: Donald Pleasence, Jan Francis, and Frank Langella. *Dracula* (1979)



he wishes. His adversaries prove ineffectual and are easily defeated with sarcastic asides and violent invectives from their quarry. Langella used all the Count's shape-changing abilities to great effect against a breathtaking Cornish backdrop, biting conquests and turning them into midnight hags that nestled in catacombs with sewer rats as their only companions. The Count had no fangs at the behest of Langella himself, who believed

that the trick had been played too many times. 'This decision may have hurt the film, as Hammer re-runs were still being widely screened on television with a very toothsome Christopher Lee. The film, though beautifully shot and with a great John Williams score, would get the thumbs-down from fans and critics alike. An open ending signified the possibility of a sequel, but Universal never exploited the opportunity.

• • •

Werner Herzog's remake *Nosferatu the Vampyre*, starring Klaus Kinski, was the second outing for Stoker's story in 1979. Kinski utilizes his best method-acting techniques to breathe life again into

perhaps the most repellent and iconic of screen vampires, although he denied ever seeing Max Schreck's silent original. Losing the ethereal and supernatural qualities of his predecessor, Kinski emits an aura of a vapid, decaying fungus, venturing towards the jugular to literally suck the life from his victims. The actor provides what must be the Count's most understated death scene; Dracula suffers a cold-turkey withdrawal as the sun strikes him, in a sequence that negates the need for a big-budget meltdown and shows Kinski's commitment to the role.

Unfortunately, Herzog's mystifying need to duplicate vital scenes from the Murnau masterpiece thwarts the actors' original approach incessantly. The director picks out images worthy of Goya or Bosch as the disgustingly cadaverous Count offsets his rotting decadence with the strikingly photogenic beauty of co-star Isabelle Adjani. Sadly, the film failed to provide any real scares as it went head-to-head at the box office with the John Badham film, which shares a similar lack of shocks. But both Counts do get to defeat their enemies and walk away with the girl at the end.

• • •

Both 1979 versions of the classic tale lost out to Stan Dragoti's seriously comic take, *Love At First Bite*, with George Hamilton stalking his lost love across the centuries and finding her reincarnated as a scatter-brained nymphomaniac (Susan St James). Further nails were hammered into the coffin as *Dracula Sucks*, in the same year, added sex and more sex to Universal's screenplay. Christopher Lee had laid his very strait-laced Dracula to rest in 1973, and things had really begun to get out of hand.

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With Langella's Count left literally all



at sea in John Badham's film and Bruno Ganz riding a horse towards a sandswept oblivion in *Nosferatu*, things seemed to have come to a close for Dracula. The 1980s barely nodded towards the aristocrat of bloody horror, as new characters emerged in the knife-fingered Freddy Krueger and the hook-handed Candyman. Both figures were awakened through our darkest nightmares and sliced up naughty teenagers in their beds after some serious



sex episodes. Dracula was given a back seat as he terrified 12-year-old school kids who braved the cinema to see him take on *The Monster Squad* (1988). Duncan Regier admitted to imbuing his Count with the attributes that he had loved in the Lugosi/Lee versions of the tale and, perhaps prophetically, ended the movie by being whisked back through a portal with his old nemesis Professor Van Helsing, where his old-time scares had been more appreciated.



The nineties unleashed vampires of a different vein. The bloodletting was taken into the schoolroom as Fran Rubel Kuzui filmed Joss Whedon's early treatment of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), and John Landis' *Innocent Blood* had naked Femme Fatale Anne Parillaud feasting, quite literally, on members of the Mob,



headed by perennial scene-stealer Robert Loggia as Sel "The Shark" Macelli. In the UK, low-budget stinkers like *I Bought a Vampire Motorcycle* were being shot independently, and Italy had remakes of classics like *Black Sunday* that bombed, as they missed the charm and talent of the movies they tried to ape. Melancholic wanderers surfaced in such maudlin fare as *The Reluctant Vampire*, with Adam Ant, and *Tale of a Vampire*, with Julian Sands, and the real blood and gore had been left in the hands of the Romanians and their vampire battles in *Subspecies* (1990). Amongst this neurotic bunch of blood-suckers, is it any wonder that Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) would find it hard to regain his position as the Master of the Undead?

• • •

With incredible, eye-catching set pieces adorning a 40-foot soundstage, and a script written by someone who had tried to capture major Dracula sequences that he'd remembered from his own adolescence, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* hit the cinemas amidst yet another media circus.

Francis Ford Coppola's big-budget remake is still the last major adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel. Its final title, along with the working title *Dracula: The Untold Story*, show just how high the mov-



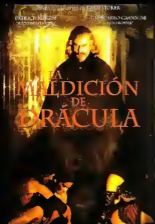
Gary Oldman in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)



THIS PAGE: Sadie Frost as Lucy; Maxine Peacock as Harker; and Anthony Hopkins as Van Helsing. From *Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

lemakers were aiming. Adapted for the screen by James V Hart, the draw of the film is that it contains everything that one can remember reading in the novel, but while staying true to the details of Stoker's book, the finished film is far from being true to its spirit. Gary Oldman bravely stepped into the overtly bright costumes designed by Elko Ishioka and underwent intense makeup sessions at the hands of FX guru Greg Cannom to bring a new look for the Count and a modern audience. With more lost love repetitions and even more heavy breathing than the Langella version, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* double-quadrupled its takings at the box





office and people are still being led to believe that they have witnessed the definitive *Dracula* adaptation.

In fairness, I actually believe that the Count has had some of his best show-cases on television. John Carradine had first breathed life into the aristocrat for TV in 1956, but this production—frustratingly—seems forever lost. In 1968, Denholm Elliot stepped away from his usual loveable-rogue persona and arned his Count *Dracula* with cool sunglasses, Nosferatu-type fangs and a questionable accent for an episode of British TV's celebrated *Mystery and Imagination* series. Losing the Count's savagery, he is destroyed by the rising of the sun as the rays melt the skin off his face like wax.

Philip Saville's *Count Dracula* (1978), written by Gerald Savoury and starring Louis Jourdan, remains the most faithful adaptation transmitted to the screen. A worthy adversary to Frank Finlay's Van Helsing, Jourdan is the character envisaged by Bram Stoker, a count able to assimilate himself into Victorian London (something Christopher Lee's Count, in the later Hammer *Dracula* films, would never have been able to accomplish without turning heads). The only drawback is that the film is overlong, due to the maker's trying to fit every detail of the novel into its three-hour running time.

Roger Young's *Dracula's Curse* (2002) lands *Dracula* (Patrick Bergin) squarely in modern Romania, hiding behind two identities: the young, camp, chain-smoking Vladislav Tepesh, and his older and fiendishly lecherous uncle, Count Vladislav Tepesh. Young's script and direction give *Dracula* the ability to frighten people again, and it is a pity that this version is condemned regularly without people having viewed it first as Bergin gives one of the most accurate portrayals of everyone's favourite blood-drinker.

In 2006, Marc Warren would down-play the character as a very creepy illegal immigrant, brought to England with Arthur Holmwood's money in the belief that he can cure Holmwood's disease, hereditary syphilis, with his own unique blood transfusions. This canny count also has Van Helsing locked away in his cellar, as he senses the old man's threat. As his decadence gets the better of him, *Dracula* is staked, but in a 20<sup>th</sup>-century turnabout, the fadeout suggests he may well rise again.

As I write, we are on the verge of witnessing another *Dracula* movie. Directed by Italian horrormeister Dario Argento, *Dracula 3D* stars Rutger Hauer as the first legitimate Dutchman to play Van Helsing, alongside actor Thomas Kretschmann's ordinary-looking Count *Dracula*. Universal's NBC TV are about to release a new *Dracula* TV series, and several independent productions are advertised across the internet and based directly on the novel. As straight adaptations grow and a new vampire series pops up on our small screens every other week, I feel that each and every one of us owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Abraham Stoker for keeping us all trembling in our beds in the darkest watches of the night. I predict that when all the TV fare of *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Being Human* and even *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* have become nothing but fondly remembered snippets of yesteryear, *Dracula* will still be waging his war on Van Helsing and executing his revenge across the centuries to come.

by Charles Butler



# THE PRIMROSE PATH TO DRACULA



Paul Murray (author of *From The Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker*) explores the great writer's literary and personal duality.



IT IS COMMONPLACE to identify the good/evil duality of *Dracula* but not to locate it in the context of Bram Stoker's previous fiction, or to see a similar dichotomy that existed in Stoker's own psyche. This essay looks at Stoker's personal duality, oscillating between wholesomeness and morbidity, which was reflected in an arc of literature that stretched from his first stories—published in Dublin in the 1870s—to his 1897 masterpiece. Over this period he restated and refined his personal concerns until they eventually culminated in the creation of one of the best-known characters in world literature. A secondary, related, question is whether it is possible to identify the source of his personal morbidity.

I aim to address, firstly, the con-

tinuum of Stoker's fiction from his first published stories in the Dublin *Shamrock* magazine in the mid-1870s—when Stoker was in his late twenties and still living in Ireland—up to and including *Dracula* over twenty years later. I believe that a developing dualistic pattern of horror and romance is evident in his work, reaching its apogee in *Dracula*, and that through his fiction he was expressing his innermost concerns. This reading is buttressed by the admittedly slender intimate biographical material at our disposal, including a notebook belonging to Stoker as a young man.

In assessing the canon of Stoker fiction up to 1897, one underappreciated factor is the duality of viciousness and sweetness. Some of it is sweet to the point of vacuousness—*Miss Betty*; for exam-

ple—while some other elements, such as his 1887 short story "The Dualists," are almost pathologically vicious. Much of his output, *Dracula* being the most notable example, combines both, but a central question to be addressed in probing the mind that created his sole, if uneven, masterpiece is why his mind alternated between such emotional extremes.

*Miss Betty* was published just several months after *Dracula* but had been written some years previously—Stoker had tried to publish it as early as 1894. It is reasonable to assume that it was written in parallel with *Dracula*, whose origins stretched back to the late 1880s. The fact that Stoker dedicated *Miss Betty* to his wife, Florence, indicates that he saw it as a sweet, romantic work. While there is some intrusion of horror, including a re-

currence of the terrifying dreams that had featured in his earlier novels, it is not sufficient to alter the overall romantic tenor of the novel.

It says much of the atmosphere in which Stoker wrote that *Miss Betty* was probably more extensively and better reviewed than *Dracula*. *Punch*, a popular British magazine of the period, saw Stoker as compensating for the terror of *Dracula*; having written one of "the most blood-curdling novels of the age, [he] makes amends by giving us ... one of the prettiest."<sup>1</sup> *The Era* also found it "pretty,"<sup>2</sup> while *The Irish Times* declared Stoker to be the successor of Robert Louis Stevenson: "It is a specimen of wholesome, healthy, and stirring fiction such as is seldom placed upon the modern bookshelf, and we commend it to all readers of cultivated literary taste."<sup>3</sup>

In trying to account for such alternations of sweetness and horror in Stoker's fiction, it is difficult to align them with the circumstances of his adult life. Both *Dracula* and *Miss Betty* were written when their author was enjoying great professional success as the acting manager of Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre, making him a popular figure in the artistic and social life of late nineteenth-century London. He moved there at the end of 1878, not just to take up his position at the Lyceum but primarily to develop his career as a writer. A stream of short stories and, from 1890, novels seemed to indicate that he had succeeded. We know little of his family life, but such limited information as we have indicates that it was satisfactory. For example, writing to her mother in 1891, Florence Stoker describes her "harmony" lessons as her only amusement, as she had so much to do now for Bram.<sup>4</sup> He was working on both *Miss Betty* and *Dracula* around this time, so a dysfunctional relationship with Florence appears unlikely as the driving force behind the creation of either.<sup>5</sup>

Before he published his first novel, *The Snake's Pass* (1890), Stoker's main fictional output was the short story, some of the best of which he published in the 1880s when Irving and he were busy es-

tablishing the preeminent reputation of the Lyceum among the London theatres of the time. Throughout most of his adult life, from his days as a young man in Dublin through to his final days in London, he continued to write short stories, albeit with mixed results. They were the means by which he maintained his literary activity in the mid- to late 1880s, when he was most immersed in his duties at the Lyceum and his fictional output was at its lowest. As ever, there was a contrast between innocuous stories such as "Our New House," which appeared in *The Theatre Annual* of 1886, and "The Dualists," published in the same periodical a year later.

At the centre of "The Dualists" is a married couple who come into conflict

Some of Stoker's fiction is sweet to the point of vacuousness — while some other elements are almost pathologically vicious.

with two pathologically violent young boys. Stoker develops their destructive tendencies, as they progress from petty nastiness to murder, all the while being smiled on by society. I describe it in my biography as an extraordinarily vicious story, devastating in its cynicism about human nature, and point to parallels with some of the Lyceum plays: *The Bells*,<sup>6</sup> for example, in which the character of Mathias is esteemed by society but has a secret murder in his past. It prefigures the infanticide which would feature in *The Snake's Pass* and *Dracula*.<sup>7</sup> The manner in which a father is led to kill his own infant twins and is then, together with his wife, killed by their falling bodies is as horrific as the vampiric consumption of live babies at

the Count's castle.

A key piece of the jigsaw of Stoker's psychological oscillations between light and darkness only came to my attention as I was reading my 2004 biography for publication.<sup>8</sup> I received a message from Noel Dobbs — Stoker's great-grandson and head of the family following the death of his redoubtable mother, Ann Stoker, a few years earlier — that he had discovered a notebook belonging to Stoker as a young man, in which the aspiring writer had jotted down random thoughts. In the late 1990s I had assisted with the purchase of the Stoker family papers in the late 1990s by the library of Trinity College Dublin, Stoker's *alma mater*, but the notebook, which had lain undisturbed in an attic, had only come to light at this point.<sup>9</sup>

There was a good deal of biographical interest in the notebook, and I had to make extensive, last-minute changes to my text to accommodate its importance. One item in particular made an impression on me: the draft outline for a story in which two sailors are in love with the same girl, one of whom she married. When, however, her husband returns from a sea voyage, he sees his young wife crucified on a great cross which stands at the end of the pier, presumably a horrific act of vengeance by the thwarted suitor.<sup>10</sup> This indicated that Stoker's casual scribbles contained the same viciousness that would surface in his fiction and that it was therefore deeply embedded in his mentality.

The notebook, which covers the period from around 1868 to 1881, consists mostly of short telegraphic entries from the 1870s, while Bram was still in Dublin.<sup>11</sup> It is clear that horror was much on his mind. For example, in October 1872, he is musing on Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" as a suitable "subject for drama."<sup>12</sup> He noted a story of man who had been brought back to life in a dissecting room "by the application of a new power unexpected."<sup>13</sup> Another cryptic note states: "Servants room looking out through glass door as earth bank like side of grave with just room above ground to see a ghastly hand (?) against the moon-





light creeping like a snake Miss D. digging in the garden like a ghoul."<sup>45</sup> Stoker's imagination had transmogrified an everyday scene of a lady gardening into dramatic ghoulishness.

A further reference to "Strange revelation of a murder in a dream Carlow—watch in haystack"<sup>46</sup> is interesting in the context of the horrific dreams that would permeate Stoker's fiction, *Dracula* especially. Another fragmentary idea for a story concerned two people attempting to commit suicide on account of the same person, who go to opposite sides of the same river and jump in; at which point each wishes to save the other. This exemplified the somewhat bizarre, violent side of Stoker's personality, while at the same time exemplifying the heroic, rescue theme that would be a *leitmotif* of his later fiction.<sup>47</sup>

Stoker's fictional output at this time mirrored the private preoccupations of his notebook. In the mid-1870s, *The Shamrock* magazine in Dublin became an outlet for his stories. The first of these, "The Primrose Path,"<sup>48</sup> was published in February/March, 1875. The relocation of its central character, Jerry, a Dublin working-man, to London (which would also attract Count Dracula) triggers a chain of disasters that results in alcoholism, murder and suicide.

While "The Primrose Path" is primarily a temperance morality tale, it represents an early manifestation of Stoker's preoccupation with the duality of good and evil. It features two wanderers, one of whom is a form of living dead, with a skull instead of a head underneath his hat. Stoker develops this theme also through the character of a publican, Grinnell, whose face was "so drawn and twisted, with nose and lips so eaten away with some strange canker, that it resembled more the ghastly front of a skull than the face of a living man." Here is the prototype of a character inhabiting the borderland between life and death that Stoker would develop through Black Murdock in *The Snake's Pass* and culminate in Count Dracula. The ambiguity of this evil is not confined merely to the monsters: Jerry,

the story's hapless hero, laughs "the hard, cold laugh of a demon" as he prepares to dispatch his wife, Katey. Prior to her murder, she is subject to horrific dreams of a type that would also recur in both *The Snake's Pass* and *Dracula*. Similar dreams occur in "Buried Treasures," the next of Stoker's stories to be published in *The Shamrock*, in 1875.<sup>22</sup> In other words, important elements of *Dracula* are evident in Stoker's work from the very beginning, while he was still a young civil servant in Dublin.<sup>23</sup>

In 1881, Stoker published his book of fairy stories, *Under the Sunset*, which, while ostensibly aimed at children, fea-



LAFCADIO HEARN (1850–1904)

in 1897.

*The Snake's Pass*, set in Ireland, prefigures *Dracula* in many important respects. Its romantic triangle of two men in love with the same woman is threatened by the twin evils of the King of the Snakes and Black Murdoch, a villainous gombeen moneylender. The shape-shifting King of the Snakes feasts on live babies as would the female vampires in *Dracula*, while Murdoch, the "human-shaped wolf," shares the Count's essentially werewolf characteristics.

It is clear that the recurring expression of horror in Stoker's work was related to a darkness that overlay his mind, a contrast to the hearty face he presented to the world. It is interesting to compare him with the subject of my first biography, Lafcadio Hearn.<sup>24</sup> Both were near contemporaries, born just three years apart, in 1847 and 1850 respectively. Both grew up in middle-class circumstances in the Dublin of the 1850s and 1860s. Both their

imaginations were suffused, lifelong, with horrors rooted in childhood that found expression in their writing long after they had left Dublin.

It would be tempting to try to link both and develop a common explanation based on the circumstances of the Dublin of the era. This would be even more satisfying if it were possible to also link backwards to the earlier Dublin giants of horror fiction, Charles Maturin and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. However, the efforts of various critics to externalise the roots of Gothic writing notwithstanding, the most obvious explanation seems to lie in the individual personalities of Hearn and Stoker. Hearn documented the psychological misery of his Dublin childhood in such a way that the origins of his adult trauma are quite clear.<sup>25</sup>

Stoker, by contrast, left little personal information about himself—he was consciously secretive<sup>26</sup>—but it would be difficult to posit the kind of emotional deprivation that so scarred Hearn as applying in his case. He seems to have been close to both of his parents, who were, in turn, supportive and, indeed, produced a family of notably successful children. One imponderable is that in both cases, in common with the middle-class norms of the time, servants did much of the child-rearing, but in the case of the Stokers, the nanny in question seems to have been loved by her charges.

The trauma of Stoker's childhood took a different form from Hearn's. Without resorting to paperback psychology, it does not take too much imagination to



BRAM STOKER (1847–1912)

tured disturbing elements, such as the early deaths of parents and children. Much of the book had been written prior to Stoker's departure from Dublin. His next full-length book, *The Snake's Pass* (1890),<sup>27</sup> marked the beginning of a period of novel-writing that would last almost until his death in 1912. *The Water of the Moat* and *The Shoulder of Shasta* would follow in the mid-1890s,<sup>28</sup> before *Dracula*



accept that a debilitating, if unspecified, illness which lasted from infancy to the age of seven would have had a traumatic effect. According to Stoker's *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906), he was often on the point of death and could not stand upright until he was seven. He remembered his mother sometimes thinking he was dying, and being taken in people's arms and laid on a bed or sofa. Later, he confided to his notebook that it was as if he were his own offspring, feeling an infinite pity for himself, a poor little lonely child.<sup>27</sup> A passage in "The Chain of Destiny" probably describes Stoker's feelings as he recovered from the illness:

It was a good sign of returning health, for it was like the waking from a dream to a world of fact, with all its troubles and cares. There was a sense of coldness and loneliness in the world, and I felt I had lost something without gaining anything in return.

Some Freudian commentators locate the origins of *Dracula* in Stoker's early illness, and I do not necessarily disagree with them overall. Some of the grounds, however, on which they built their case are spurious when confronted with the facts. The claim that his mother might have taken a resisting child to hospital where, in forbidding surroundings, he was left to the mercy of the primitive medical procedures of the time is unlikely, as the hospitals of the era served the poor while the better-off had treatment—including operations—at home. This could have involved, in Stoker's case bloodletting, then still in vogue.<sup>28</sup>

Freudian commentary sees two of Stoker's early stories, "How 7 Went Mad" and "The Wondrous Child," as representing sibling rivalry, a result of the bedridden Stoker being unable to dissipate his aggression through healthy outlets. Again, this line of speculation tends to be a victim of its own exaggeration, but its central core, that the helpless young Stoker would have been immensely frustrated during these early years, is highly likely. Certainly his description, quoted above, of waking from a dream to a world of fact would

support a connection between this period of illness and the dreams, often horrific, that recur in his fiction. Indeed, given the likelihood that Stoker would have been treated with the opiate, laudanum, then commonly in use for a variety of ailments in children and adults, his dreams may well have had a nightmarish tinge.<sup>29</sup>

[Stoker would go]  
stamping about  
the heavy sand,  
prodding it with  
the heavy stick,  
waving his arms  
and shouting at  
the great rollers  
as they thundered  
up the beach,  
and altogether  
behaving in such an  
outlandish way...

The lack of information on Stoker's interior world inhibits a full examination of his psychology, but a 1905 description by a sympathetic observer does allude to ambiguous aspects of his character:

Impulsive, quick-tempered, generous, and moody, like most complex personalities, he is liable to be misunderstood by the mere outsider, but to those who look below the surface and can sympathise with the artistic and literary temperament, Bram Stoker is as popular as he can be genial. A philosopher, and fond of his own society, preferring to spend most of his leisure amongst the characters of his creation, Bram Stoker has yet varied interests and his views are of a very broad-minded nature.<sup>30</sup>

The reference to being fond of his own society and preferring to spend his time writing fiction rather than socialising does echo some other information at our disposal. George Hay, a resident of Cruden Bay in Scotland, where Stoker often holidayed, remembered him lying passively for hours at a time in a hammock, looking out to sea, while at other times he would go "stamping about the heavy sand, prodding it with the heavy stick, waving his arms and shouting at the great rollers as they thundered up the beach, and altogether behaving in such an outlandish way that George's second cousin, Eliza, who worked at the Kilmarnock Arms, was afraid to walk home across the sands to Whinnifyld, and took the long way round."<sup>31</sup>

Because Stoker has been dismissed by some earlier critics as almost an automaton, driven by a range of impulses of which he had little understanding, and over which he could exercise little control,<sup>32</sup> the character of *Dracula* was located primarily in a range of external circumstances: he was inspired by Vlad the Impaler or resentment of Henry Irving; or the cast of the novel are representative of the leading personalities of the Lyceum Theatre, a sort of tableau in which they can be readily identified: *Dracula* is, of course, Henry Irving, Mina Murray/Harker is Ellen Terry, and so forth.<sup>33</sup> Those who acknowledge internal trauma on Stoker's part also fail to relate it to Stoker's literary output, with the exception of *Dracula*. It seems reasonably clear, however, that the duality of good and evil, romance and violence, was evident in Stoker's fictional writings from the beginning, and this mirrored a similar complexity in his own psyche.

by Paul Murray



## Notes

- 1 *Miss Betty*, London: C Arthur Pearson, 1898; New English Library, London, 1974
- 2 "The Dualities or the death doom of the double born," *The Theatre Annual*, Clement Scott (ed), London, 1887
- 3 *Punch* 5/3/1898
- 4 *The Era*, 12/3/1898, 16
- 5 *The Irish Times*, 26/3/1898
- 6 Stoker Family Papers, Florence Stoker to her mother, London, 21/7/1891
- 7 See *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker*, Paul Murray, London: Jonathan Cape, 2004, 79-83, regarding the relationship between Stoker and his wife, including claim of frigidity on her part, amongst others
- 8 Adapted by Henry Irving and Leopold Lewis from the French version of *Le Juif Polonais* by M.M. Eckmann-Chatrin. See *The Bells or The Polish Jew*, Eckmann, Emile and Chatrin, Pierre Alexandre, New York: De Witt, 1872
- 9 *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 152
- 10 *From the Shadow of Dracula*, X
- 11 As I was stationed in Seoul as Ambassador of Ireland at this time, my good friend, the distinguished author and commentator, Dr Ruth Dudley Edwards, inspected the notebook on my behalf and, recognising its importance, arranged for it to be copied to me. It goes without saying that I am deeply indebted to Ruth, as well as to Noel Dobbs
- 12 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 55 ND; See *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 69
- 13 Stoker joined Irving at the Lyceum Theatre in London in December 1878
- 14 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 33, 25/10/1872

- 15 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 33, ND. This connects with Stoker's love of emerging technologies as well as referring back to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*
- 16 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 34, ND
- 17 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 87, ND
- 18 Stoker notebook, Noel Dobbs Collection, 215, 3/10/1880
- 19 "The Primrose Path. A Serial in Ten Chapters", Bram Stoker, *The Shamrock*, Vol. 12 6/2/1875-6/3/1875, Dublin, 289-90; 312-7; 330-6; 345-9; 360-5. Reprinted with an introduction by Richard Dalby, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, United Kingdom: The Desert Island Dracula Library, 1999
- 20 "Buried Treasures. A Serial in Four chapters", Bram Stoker, *The Shamrock*, Vol. 12, Dublin, 13-25 March 1875
- 21 During which time he wrote his first full-length book, *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, Dublin: John Falconer, 1879
- 22 *The Snake's Pass*, Bram Stoker, London: Sampson Low & Co., 1891 [1890]; Brandon, Dingle, Ireland, 1990
- 23 *The Watter's Mow*, Bram Stoker, New York: L. DeVinne & Co., 1894; London: The Acme Library, 1894; A. Constable and Co., London, 1895; *The Shoulder of Shanta*, Bram Stoker, London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895; Reprinted with annotation and introduction by Johnson, Alan; Leatherdale, Clive, series ed., Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, United Kingdom: The Desert Island Dracula Library, 2000
- 24 *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn*, Paul Murry, Folkestone,

England: The Japan Library, 1993, USA: University of Michigan Press, 1997. See also *Nightmare Touch*, an anthology of the horror writings of Lafcadio Hearn, edited and introduced by Paul A. Murray, England, Tartarus Press, 2010

- 25 *A Fantastic Journey*, 234-270
- 26 He described himself to Walt Whitman as possessing "a large amount of self-control and am naturally secretive to the world." Quoted in *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 64. Stoker's interest in secret writing and cipher is evident in *The Mystery of the Sea*; see *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 223
- 27 *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 24
- 28 "How 7 Went Mad," one of the stories in *Under the Sunset*, features a Nurse from the Grammar Village who is trying to bleed the subject of the story, which may reflect Stoker's own childhood experience. See *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 150
- 29 In "The Pains of Opium" section of *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, Thomas De Quincey describes opiate side-effects that include insomnia, nightmares and frightening visions, as well as ghostly processions of a type that would feature in Stoker's fiction
- 30 *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 247
- 31 *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 221
- 32 This reading of Stoker ignores his excellence as editor—hardly hardly compatible with an inability to fully understand a text—acknowledged by both Genevieve Ward and Hall Caine, both of whom believed that they have achieved great success as a result of his editorial assistance. See *From the Shadow of Dracula*, 94 and 127-8
- 33 See *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker*, especially pages 165-208



# BRAM STOKER

## The Story of a Great Friendship

The following Bram Stoker obituary was written by Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine, and originally appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 April 1912. Hall Caine, a very successful author and possibly Bram's closest friend was memorialized by his nickname, "Hommy-Beg" to whom *Dracula* was dedicated.

**B**RAM STOKER is to be buried today. The remains will be cremated at Golder's-green Crematorium. Only the friends (and they are many) who knew and loved him will be there when the last offices are done, and that will be enough. He could have desired no more and no better. The big, breathless, impetuous hurricane of a man who was Bram Stoker had no love of the limelight.

A few days ago I stood, for the twentieth time or more, at the foot of that sloping stone, under the shadow of the pyramid of Caius Cestius, which bears Leigh Hunt's simple but great inscription, "Cor Cordium." Nothing also was needed to tell the world the place of the great brother-poet's rest. And nothing else, and nothing less, will be necessary to tell the few friends who really and truly knew Bram Stoker (fully conscious that he had no other claim to greatness) that all that was mortal of his big heart has been committed to the dust.

In one thing our poor Bram, who had many limitations, was truly great. His was in-

deed the genius of friendship. I speak as perhaps the oldest of his surviving associates, outside the immediate circle of his family, when I say that never in any other man have I seen such capacity for devotion to a friend.

Much has been said of his relation to Henry Irving, but I wonder how many were really aware of the whole depth and significance of that association. Bram seemed to give up his life to it. It was not only his time and his services that he gave to Irving—it was his heart, which never failed for one moment in loyalty, in enthusiasm, in affection, in the strongest love that man may feel for man. I remember what all this was in those far-off first days of their relation, when Irving said one night in Liverpool, "Bram Stoker is coming to join me"; I follow it in memory through the triumphant times of dazzling success, and the dark days of sickness, failing powers, and financial misfortune, down to the last great but tragic hour (and after it), and I say without any hesitation that never have I seen, never do I expect to see, such absorption of one man's life in the life of another.



MR. BRAM STOKER.  
From a Photo. by Watery.

## Irving and His Ally

**I**F BRAM'S BODY had its rightful resting place it would be at Irving's feet; and yet he was a man of himself, a strong and stalwart separate being who in his best days might have stood alone.

Never, I am certain, had he any thought of sacrifice, but while always rewarded with the gratitude of that other great heart, what a price he paid for his devotion to his chief? We who were very close to him realised this fact when the time of the asundering came, and we saw that with Irving's life poor Bram's had really ended. It was too late to begin afresh. The threads that had been broken thirty years before could not be pieced together. There could be no second flowing of the tide. It was the ebb, and though Bram made a brave fight for a new life, he knew well, and we knew well, that his chances were over.

I am partly conscious that in the world of the theatre there were those (and perhaps they were not a few) who attributed to Bram every misfortune that overtook them in their connection with his principal; but I wonder if they gave a thought to the inevitable difficulties of the place he filled. Into the life of nearly all great men (especially such a man as Irving was) there come moments when it is necessary to do disagreeable things, and yet not come to seem to do them. Someone must then stand between, assuming the responsibility, taking the blame, accepting the blow. It would not be a gracious thing to say how often during a score of years I saw Bram in that position. It is sweeter to remember that Irving himself always knew and never forgot.

Thinking of this reminds me how miserably mistaken was the estimate of Bram's personal character, which prevailed at that period. He had to steel himself to say "No," and to shirk no painful duty, but his real nature was of the tenderest. When I think how tender it was there come crowding upon me incident after incident in which his humanity shone

out as a bright light, though the scene of it was only the front of a box-office, the door to the gallery, the passageway to the pit. But it was not there that his best qualities appeared. Bram was a man of the theatre only by the accident of his great love for its leader, and his true self was something quite unlike the personality, which was seen in that environment. Those who knew him there only hardly knew him at all.

Some hint of this would occasionally reveal itself among the scarcely favourable conditions of a public dinner, when, as speaker (always capable of the racy humour which is considered necessary to that rather artificial atmosphere), he would strike, in the soft roll of his rich Irish tongue, a note of deep and almost startling emotion that would obliterate the facile witticisms of more important persons.

## Literary Work

**I**CANNOT TRULY SAY that this deeper side of the man ever expressed itself in his writings. He took no vain view of his efforts as an author. Frankly, he wrote his books to sell, and except in the case of one of them (his book on Irving), he had no higher aims. But higher aims were there, and the power of realising them had not been denied to him.

When I think of his literary output I regret the loss of the one book with which he might have enriched the literature of autobiography. The multitude of interesting persons with whom his position brought him into contact—Tennyson, Disraeli, Gladstone, Randolph Churchill, Archbishop Benson, President Cleveland, Walt Whitman, Rénan—had left him with a vast store of memories which the public would have welcomed if he had written them down. He never did write them, and the world is the poorer for want of his glimpses, however brief and casual, of some of its great souls in their happiest hours.

In concluding this little and imperfect tribute to the memory of a massive

and muscular and almost volcanic personality that must have been familiar by sight to many thousands in Great Britain and America, I could wish to end where I began with the warmest and most affectionate recognition of his genius for friendship. No one knows better than the friend to whom, under various disguises (impenetrable to all except themselves), he dedicated in words of love some of his best-known books (*Dracula* in particular), how large was the heart that was not entirely exhausted even by the devotion to the great man with whom his name is generally associated. There were moments during the past twenty-odd years when I felt ashamed that anybody should give me his time, his energy, and his enthusiasm as Bram gave them, and the only way in which I could reconcile myself to his splendid self-sacrifice was to remember that he loved to make it. I can think of nothing—absolutely nothing—that I could have asked Bram Stoker to do for me that he would not have done. It is only once in a man's life that such a friendship comes to him, and when the grave is closed on the big heart which we are to bury to-day, I shall feel that I have lost it.

Of the devotion of his wife during these last dark days, in which the whirlwind of his spirit had nothing lost to it but the broken wreck of a strong man, I cannot trust myself to speak. That must always be a sacred memory to those who knew what it was. If his was the genius of friendship, hers must have been the genius of love.

Courtesy of Dacre C. Stoker and the Bram Stoker Estate. Original text provided by the Bram Stoker Society.





*Unearthing*

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**STOKER'S**

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Lost Journal

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**T**HE YEAR 2012 marks the centenary of Bram Stoker's death. Though interest in Stoker still tends to focus on him as the author of *Dracula* (1897), several scholars in the last three decades have gone beyond his Gothic novel to assess the significance of his other works, especially his novels and short stories. Others have focused on his neglected non-fiction, ranging from his journalistic pieces to his two-volume *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906). A few have speculated that his native Ireland played a major role in his development as a writer, even venturing to claim *Dracula* as an "Irish" novel. Yet many naysayers continue to dismiss Stoker as an Irish writer, contending that although he wrote one novel set in Ireland (*The Snake's Pass*, 1890), he completely ignored Dublin, the city where he spent the first thirty years of his life. A recently discovered journal demolishes such claims.

## Out of the Attic

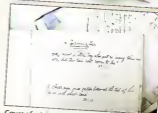
**T**HE JOURNAL RESIDES ON a bookshelf on the Isle of Wight, in the home of Noel Dobbs, Bram Stoker's great-grandson. It was among the books left to him by his

grandfather Noel Stoker. For decades it languished in obscurity, its existence unknown to the world of Stoker and *Dracula* scholars and fans alike, until it was noticed by Noel Dobbs about ten years ago. Other than providing access to Paul Murray, who incorporated elements of it into his biography *From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), the journal has remained inaccessible. Now its full contents, along with annotations and commentary, are available

## The journal provides tantalizing insights into Stoker's character, his Gothic sensibility and his Irishness.

in a new publication entitled *The Lost Journal of Bram Stoker*.

The journal comprises 330 individual entries of varying lengths, written by hand on about 160 pages over an 11-year period (1871-1882). Most of the entries were recorded before Stoker left Dublin for London at the end of 1878. Indeed, Dublin stands centre-stage as its native son provides details about his life in the city: his colleagues at Dublin Castle, his classmates at Trinity College, his early



Cover of original Journal and a page (with permission of Bram Stoker Estate)

attraction to the theatre, his observations of the Dublin street, and above all, his rich Irish sense of humor. There are dozens of references to friends and family; travel and office life; drunken parties, court cases and christenings.

Above all, the journal is a commonplace book, a writer's companion, a grab-bag for a variety of descriptions, anecdotes, quotations, observations and musings. Sometimes Stoker writes in the first person, while at other times he comments as a detached observer, or transmits someone else's accounts. Especially noteworthy are the jottings of an emerging writer as he keeps a record of themes, plots and characters for

future use in his fiction. There are even foreshadowings of *Dracula*. Many of the entries provide tantalizing insights into the man himself—his social life, his sensitivity, his character, his moral values, his Gothic sensibility and, above all, his Irishness.

## Emerging Writer

**B**RAM STOKER BEGAN his journal in August, 1871. This is the starting point for tracing his journey as a writer. At the age of 23, he was living at the time in the family home at 43 Harcourt Street, Dublin. He had graduated from Trinity College in the previous year with a BA and would acquire the Master's degree five years later. An active student in both athletics and intellectual pursuits, he maintained his connections with the college for several years after graduation. Most significant was his continued participation in the activities of both the philosophical and historical societies. For example, just the year before (in 1870) he had delivered a lecture entitled "Means of Improvement in Composition." In addition, earlier in 1871 he had vigorously defended the poetry of Walt Whitman at a meeting of the "Phil." He kept close contact with many of his university friends, several of whom make brief appearances throughout the journal.

In August, 1871, having followed dutifully in the path towards respectability laid out for him by his father, he was employed as a civil servant at the Department of Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks, Dublin Castle. He was still using the name Abraham, which he shared with his father. He would not adopt the more informal "Bram" until after his father's death in 1876, an outward sign of his breaking free, shedding the weight of both name and expectations. In his position at Dublin Castle, Stoker spent many hours tediously recording and filing reports from the petty sessions courts. His journal allowed him to express his creative side.

Later in 1871 he began writing regular theatre reviews for the *Dublin Evening Mail*, an activity that would lead in time to a lengthy and successful business relationship with the actor Sir Henry Irving. In 1872, his first short story was published. "The Crystal Cup," which appeared in the periodical *London Society*, tells of an imprisoned artist—maybe a metaphor for himself at Dublin Castle. Three years later it was followed by several episodes of stories in *The Shamrock*, a Dublin magazine, collectively entitled *The Primrose Path*. In these stories, Stoker tackles more intense themes—alcoholism and domestic violence, both of which were all too prevalent in the Dublin of his time.

The opening entry in the journal is entitled "Night Fishing" (pp17-18), the earliest example of his writing discovered to date. Essentially a word painting, it shows an aspiring writer composing an excessively descriptive passage in flowery prose. "Night Fishing," was written in Greystones, a coastal town in County Wicklow, about 20 miles south of Dublin. Greystones was popular in Stoker's time (and still is today) as a destination for holidaymakers. Its features include a long stretch of beach, of which part is "shingle" (ie, stony). Evidence in other entries around the same time indicates that he and a few friends were spending an

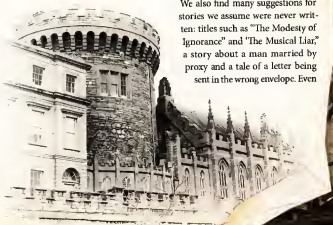
extended weekend in the coastal town. No doubt he enjoyed the opportunity to relax, away from the stress and boredom of daily work at Dublin Castle, and to allow his imagination to take wing.

Years later, Stoker would draw from his journal for two of his early books: *Under the Sunset* (a collection of short stories for children, 1881) and *The Snake's Pass* (an Irish novel, 1890). At one point he scribbles a memo for a story: "A man builds up a shadow on a wall bit by bit by adding to substance. Suddenly the shadow becomes alive" (p37). A marginal note confirms its later use as the kernel of a story in *Under the Sunset*, entitled "The Shadow Builder." Another note reads: "Palace of Fairy Queen. Child goes to sleep & palace grows—sky changes into blue silk, curtains etc" (p38). Dreaming children make appearances in a number of stories in the collection, notably "How 7 Went Mad," "Lies and Lilies," and "The Wondrous Child."

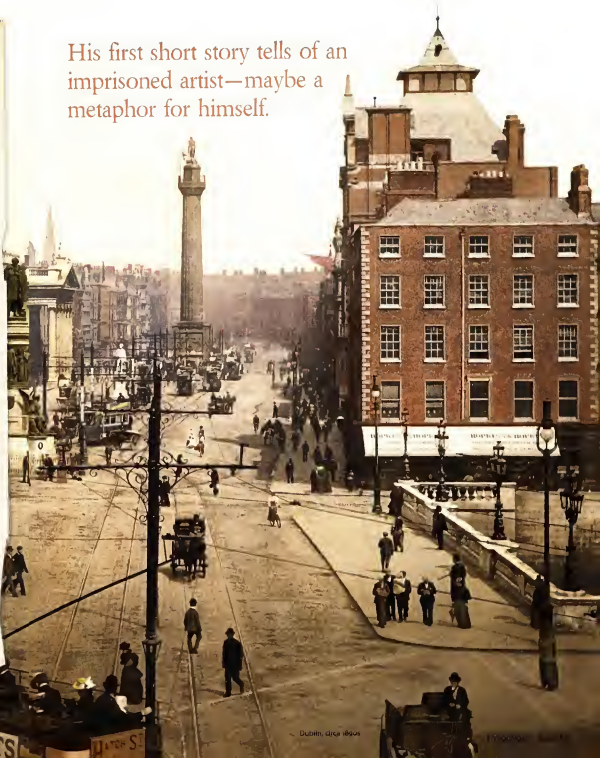
Many more notes and jottings would find their way into *The Snake's Pass*. The book shows the influence of his frequent travels around Ireland during his tenure at Petty Sessions. Much of this material appears verbatim in the book, mostly to flesh out the comic character, Andy Sullivan. At one point (p43) Stoker even constructs a bare-bones plot for the novel.

We also find many suggestions for stories we assume were never written: titles such as "The Modesty of Ignorance" and "The Musical Liar," a story about a man married by proxy and a tale of a letter being sent in the wrong envelope. Even

His first short story tells of an imprisoned artist—maybe a metaphor for himself.



DUBLIN CASTLE



Dublin, circa 1890

The journal was one of the breeding grounds for *Dracula*.

more intriguing are the notes of a "web-legged girl with legs like flippers of a seal" (p22) and of sleeping "under a rug of cat skins" (p46). At one point he planned to write a series of narratives based on modernized myths of Venus, Mars and Vulcan. He hoped to dabble in allegory, farce and comedy, and he planned a second collection of children's stories.

Bram Stoker also tried his hand at poetry. Most of it is imitative, probing the common themes of sentimental verse such as love, longing and loneliness. His earliest surviving poem, entitled "Acrostic" (pp48-49), is dated 1870. There is no evidence that it was ever submitted for publication. An acrostic is a poem in which the first letter, syllable or word of each line spells out a word, name or message. In this case, the first letters spell "Bessie L'Strange." A mystery indeed!

### Foreshadowings of *Dracula*

MAKING ENTRIES in his journal helped Stoker hone his writing skills in very tangible ways. Much of what he wrote is a series of reminders, items that he feared might otherwise be forgotten in the busy schedule that was his life. The reminders were, of course, to himself. One doubts he had any intention of sharing the journal with anybody else (though his wife Florence, who survived him by 25 years, read it at some point and made marginal notes). Sometimes he even highlighted his aide-mémoires with the designation "Mem," a technique familiar to the astute reader of *Dracula* where similar notations are made by Jonathan Harker—himself a compulsive note-taker. Harker's journal is punctuated with memos. As he records his meal of chicken at the hotel in Klausenburgh, he hastily adds in parentheses, "Mem, get recipe for Mina" (*Dracula*, p1). As he travels deeper into Transylvania and recalls how he has read of this region as

a centre of superstitions, he jots down (again parenthetically), "Mem., I must ask the Count all about them" (p2). As he records an all-night conversation with the Count at Castle Dracula, Harker makes this observation: "Mem., this diary seems horribly like the beginning of the 'Arabian Nights,' for everything has to break off at cock-crow—or like the ghost of Hamlet's father" (p31). The compulsion to "write it down" is strong.

Harker is not the only character in *Dracula* who habitually makes notes. Mina, in a letter to Lucy, makes this declaration (p55):

I shall keep a diary... a sort of journal which I can write in whenever I feel so inclined. I do not suppose there will be much of interest to other people; but it is not intended for them.... It is really an exercise book. I shall try to do what I see lady journalists do: interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember conversations. I am told that, with a little practice, one can remember all that goes on or that one hears said during a day.

Through the course of the narrative, Mina supplies Van Helsing with important notes that she has kept. These help ensure that Dracula will be tracked down and destroyed. Dr John Seward records his diary on phonograph: "Let me put down with exactness all that happened... Not a detail that I can recall must be for-

gotten" (p282). Lucy at her death leaves a memorandum. Even the lunatic Renfield "keeps a little notebook in which he is always jotting down something" (p. 71). In fact, the entire novel is a patchwork of notes of various kinds: journal entries, diary entries, letters, memoranda, photograph recordings, telegrams, newspaper reports and a ship's log. Stoker draws on up-to-date communications technology, having his characters take advantage of means of communication not available to him as note-keeper in the 1870s.

Several entries in the journal show Stoker's predilection for the Gothic, such as references to Edgar Allan Poe. Even though the final dated entry is from 1882, eight years before he made his initial notes for *Dracula*, he may have had some of the entries in mind (or even at his side) while he was composing his masterpiece. There are distinct resonances in *Dracula*, indicating that the journal should be looked at as one of the breeding grounds for his most famous book.

### Man of Humour

THE JOURNAL PROVIDES insight into Stoker as a developing writer. But it also reveals—in spades—an aspect of the author of *Dracula* that is frequently overlooked or, at best, downplayed: his remarkable sense of humor.



Scholars have for the most part bypassed this trait, content to psychoanalyze both the author and his characters, endlessly debating hidden sexual meanings in both his writing and his lifelong friendships. The revelations of this journal should encourage a reassessment of the view of Stoker as an uptight, generally humorless individual.

Humor has been defined as "the contemplation of the incongruities of life" and is usually occasioned by the juxtaposition of the ordinary and the unexpected. Such situations generate laughter because each contains an element of surprise that clashes with the normalcy of the occasion. Clearly, Stoker possessed a keen sense of the comic, and excelled at recognizing incongruities around him and transmitting them to others in the form of both spoken and written narrative. First and foremost is the man himself. He enjoyed a good laugh and raised laughter among those around him. He was always a welcome speaker at dinner parties both in Dublin and later in London. "He had a laugh that was good to hear," noted Henry Dickens (Charles's grandson). His reputation as a raconteur with a comic bent spread widely once he left Dublin. During the 1880s, when Stoker was gainfully employed as business manager for Henry Irving, the most successful actor of the Victorian stage, his sense of humour came in quite handy. Irving took Fustie (his fox terrier dog) on just about all his Lyceum Theatre Company tours, including seven of the eight to North America. Most American hotels banned dogs. Every time he was confronted with such

a refusal, Irving would walk out. On one occasion in Detroit, permission for Fustie to stay was granted when Stoker intervened to point out to the hotel manager that his establishment already admitted animals—it was overrun with rats!

Stoker had a special fondness for verbal humor and more sophisticated witicisms. Scattered throughout the journal are riddles and word-games. It should therefore come as little surprise that his published writings contain a preponderance of comic elements, sometimes obvious, sometimes more nuanced. Even *Dracula* has its humorous moments: Van Helsing's "King Laugh" speech, his broken English, and the American slang of Quincey P Morris.

## The Dubliner

**A**RGUABLY THE STRONGEST impression one gets while reading through the journal is the "Irishness" of much of the content. Not only is Stoker describing for the most part Irish scenes (both in Dublin and around the countryside), he presents them with typical Irish flourish. Many of the Dublin entries record humorous anecdotes, some personal—some second-hand:

Heard a man today speak of his wife

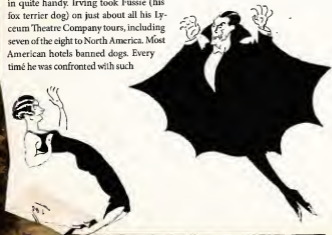
as "My mother-in-law's daughter."  
(p96)

Cecil Roche once in a speech of the Historical Society spoke of "Protestants, thieves, policemen and the rest of the criminal classes" (p92) In speaking of a pending divorce case a man said, "Oh, it is merely a case of mistaken identity." How? "Well you see, the lady mistook the other man for her husband." (p106)

Not all entries are as light-hearted. Comedy is frequently tinged with tragedy, a blending that one frequently finds in Irish humour. Irish history is rife with irony and incongruity, qualities which lie at the core of both tragedy and comedy. Ireland's history follows a repetitive pattern of downfall and recovery, invariably followed by famine and disease. Part of the resilience of the Irish lies in their ability to laugh at themselves as well as others. No one was above using humour; no subject was too sacred; no one was spared. The results are often dark and disturbing. One such is an anecdote about a woman who judged the goodness of her husband by the fact that he had never given her a black eye (pp195-196). Or the woman who loses her breakfast after being kicked in the stomach (p209). We can only wonder whether Stoker actually found these incidents funny—and on what level—or if it was social commentary. We just do not know.

Violence is invariably linked to drinking and drunkenness. It is not known whether Stoker was at this stage of his life a drinker, though he was well known as a "party man." Certainly if his early fiction is any indication, he had great reservations about alcoholic consumption and the domestic violence that could ensue. His story *The Primrose Path* (1875) deals specifically with alcoholism ("the curse of Ireland") and the inevitable domestic violence that develops from heavy drinking. It reads like a tract for temperance.

On one occasion, Stoker and two of his Trinity College friends attended the St Patrick's Ball, an annual event held on 17 March, the climax of a day of fes-



tivities hosted by the Viceroy at Dublin Castle. He provides this graphic account (pp199-200):

St Patrick's Ball for the Irish People in the Exhibition Palace 1877. Admission 1/- Reserved portion 2/6 T. Martelli, Latchford, self went. There were thousands of people there and all the brass bands in Dublin. Late in the evening many men got drunk & some sick. One man got sick in the centre of Leinster Hall. The floor was waxed. Immediately a lot of fellows with one impulse rushed at the place and cut a slide. It was awful. You might see shortly after a man being brought over from the bar to get sick in the right place for the continuance of the pastime.

W. Leahy who was very obstinate would not get out of the way of a trades band which was marching up & down so they knocked him down & walked over him. The last thing he heard was, "Hit him with the fleuwtes. Hit him with the fleuwtes."

An obvious feature of many of the entries (and indeed his published writing) is the recreation of local dialect, accent and idiom. Reproducing speech in dialect is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it adds to realism, often a desired goal for a writer, especially one of supernatural fiction. Such local color aids the reader in the "willing suspension of disbelief." On the other hand, it can test the patience of the reader, especially one completely unfamiliar with the dialect. Representing dialect in written prose involves phonetic spelling of what is heard: for example, "threes" for "trees" and "sorh" for "sir." Then there are changes in grammatical structure common in Irish speech: "they do be havin' to sit" and "What would I be after doin'." Other examples include "am't" for "am not," "I seen" for "I saw" and "me" for "my." One also finds deviation from standard pronunciation, as in "tirty" for "thirty" and "dat" for "that." A certain rhythmic lyricism can be detected in corruptions such as "he sez, sez he" and "at all at all." All of these phrases and pronuncia-

tions can still be heard in Ireland today.

Of course Stoker was working with the familiar, and was close enough to the scene to be able to hear the idiom, speech pattern, accent and lilt as he wrote. When writing *Dracula* many years later, he took up the rather formidable challenge of adopting an unfamiliar dialect and idiom—that of Whitby, a town on the Yorkshire coast of England that he visited during the summer of 1890. He made a concerted effort to achieve accuracy, having gained access to a very useful book: *A Whitby Glossary* (1876), by FK Robinson. From it he took four pages of notes for *Dracula*, listing localisms followed by standard meanings. He assiduously worked many of these into the comments made by Mr Swales in Chapter 6 of the novel.

## Theatre Man

BRAM STOKER'S ATTRACTION to the theatre predates the *Journal*. During Bram's earlier years, his father encouraged this interest, taking him to numerous productions and spending hours discussing with his son the actors, the sets and the performances. The two of them—father and son—would sit in the pit, where the ticket prices were in line with their finances. Paradoxically, Abra-



SIR HENRY IRVING (1838-1905)

ham Stoker never approved of the theatre as an occupation worthy of any of his sons.

During his years at Trinity College in the 1860s, Bram Stoker actually tried his hand at acting with the Trinity Dramatic Society, appearing in two Richard Brinsley Sheridan comedies, *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*. His professor and mentor, poet and Shakespearean scholar Edward Dowden, further inspired his interest in Shakespeare, whose plays would have a significant influence on *Dracula*. In 1871, he approached the proprietor of the *Dublin Evening Mail* about writing theatre reviews. The response was that the paper could not afford such a thing, to which he replied that he "would gladly do it without fee or reward." And he did—for several years. This decision proved auspicious, as it began a chain of events that would result in his close association with Henry Irving, an eventual move to London, and a climate in which the writing of *Dracula* would be possible.

Though he remained in his civil service job, Bram Stoker became even more active in the theatre and as far more than a reviewer. Accounts show that he frequented Dublin's main theatres—the Theatre Royal, the Gaiety and the Queen's—not merely as a member of the audience or reviewer, but as a backstage guest. During this time, he learned all he could about the inner workings of a performance: the lighting, the costumes, the staging, and offered advice and encouragement to young actors and



THE LYCEUM THEATRE

actresses.

Theatre life was (and still is) fodder for numerous stories and anecdotes. Stoker, just starting to get his feet wet as a writer, indulges in a few of his own, recording them in his journal with a humorous flourish (p226):

I once saw in the Queen's Theatre a cork thrown into the orchestra by some wag in the gallery. The launcher [Barrowcliff] who was very drunk stood up, stopped the band & made an oration in which he called the audience in the gallery assassins. He said, holding up the cork, "It was only an accident & none of your fault that there was not a bottle at the end of it."

He also tells a story about Frank Seymour, one of Cork's most colourful characters. Manager of the Victoria Theatre, he was usually in financial difficulties. Furthermore, he was a very poor actor. His nickname was "Chouse" because of the way he pronounced the word "chaos." When he would be listed for a dramatic appearance, word would spread around Cork that "Chouse has come again!" His creditors once posted bailiffs at the entrance

to the theatre when he was to appear as the ghost in *Hamlet*. He avoided them by entering the theatre concealed in Ophelia's coffin.

A few entries record incidents about Henry Irving that occurred before Stoker joined him as his manager:

Henry Irving told me that he once gave a reading in a town in Scotland—Dunfermline. (It was before he had played *The Bells*.) He appeared on the platform & waited there a whole hour—but not one person came! (p230)

When we were in Belfast, Henry Irving, Loveday & myself (H.I. went to give a reading for the Samaritan Hospital 16/8/78), we were at supper with David Cunningham. There were many speeches giving Irving's health etc. One man said, "Mr Irving, gentlemen, is known to you all. We know, gentlemen, whether others know that Mr Irving leads & has ever led a life of unbroken blemish." (pp230-231)

Bram Stoker first saw Irving perform as Captain Absolute in *The Rivals* at the Theatre Royal in Dublin in 1867. Having

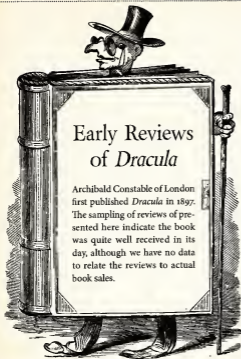
seen him on stage again in 1871, Stoker was discouraged with the lack of attention given to theatrical performances in the Dublin newspapers. That was his primary motivation for offering his services as theatre reviewer. In November 1876, after he wrote a favourable review of Irving's performance of *Hamlet*, the actor invited the reviewer to join him at the Shelbourne Hotel. This was the beginning of a friendship and a business relationship that would last until Irving's death in 1905. Indeed, in his own lifetime Bram Stoker was far better known as Irving's manager than as an author, even of *Dracula*.

For decades, Stoker has been overshadowed by his own creation. Even with this journal, there are still aspects of his life that remain obscure. But the glimpses provided into his everyday life in Dublin—his family, friends and colleagues, his prowess as an athlete; his values, his powers of observation, his political leanings, his private musings, his sense of humour—give us a more complete picture of the complex man who wrote one of the world's most famous novels.

by Elizabeth Miller



ABOVE: Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller at Greystones where Stoker began his Journal (photo by Brian J. Shavers); LEFT: Cover of book *The Last Journal of Bram Stoker*



## Early Reviews of *Dracula*

Archibald Constable of London first published *Dracula* in 1897. The sampling of reviews of presented here indicate the book was quite well received in its day, although we have no data to relate the reviews to actual book sales.

## DETROIT FREE PRESS

18 November, 1899

### "Bram Stoker's Story"

It is almost inconceivable that Bram Stoker wrote "*Dracula*." Still, he must have done it. There is his name on the title page, and before the tale was bound up and offered us between covers it ran its length in various newspapers, and under the same name of authorship.

So there is no getting around it. Bram Stoker did write it.

Think of the story. It is a tale of ghouls, vampires and human imps all in direct communication with Satan. There are lunatics and idiots in it who feed flies to spiders, spiders to sparrows, and then, in lieu of a cat, devour the sparrows themselves. A weird count—the *Dracula* from whom the book is named—lives in a castle high among the Carpathians and weaves webs for ordinary folk—casts spells over pretty girls, and draws the strings tighter until they die—the girls, that is. An amazing

man—*Dracula*. To achieve his fiendish ends he assumes many and divers forms. Now he is a spirit, visible but untangible, with two sharp front teeth and red eyes. Again he is a dog, then a bat, in turn a wolf at last. As a bat, he goes about biting people in the neck. Of course they die. A Dutch specialist in physiological psychology sets out to solve the mystery of the strange deaths. In the end *Dracula* is worsted. His head is cut off and a stake is driven through his heart. There's an outline of the tale—such is what you may hope to find between the covers.

And it is a splendid story, too; done in a manner most convincing—by letters, diaries. And medical observations.

And Bram Stoker wrote it!

Think of him.

He—a great, shambling, good-natured, overgrown boy—although he is the business manager of Henry Irving and the Lyceum Theatre—with a red beard, untrimmed, and a ruddy complexion, tempered somewhat by the wide-open full blue eyes that gaze so frankly into yours! Why, it is hard enough to imagine Bram Stoker a business man, to say nothing of his possessing an imagination capable of projecting *Dracula* upon paper.

But he has done it. And he has done it well.

If you enjoy the weird, if you care for spinal titillations, "*Dracula*" is unstintingly recommended.

## SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

17 December, 1899

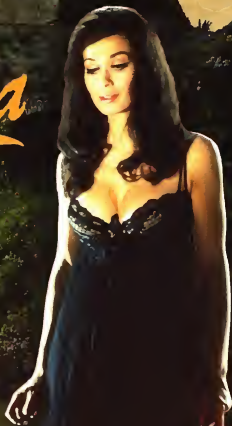
### "New Novels and Holiday Books"

One of the most powerful novels of the day, and one set apart by its originality of plot and treatment is "*Dracula*," by Bram Stoker. The author is well known in the dramatic world for his long connection with Sir Henry Irving as manager. Several years ago he wrote a weird story of Irish life, but this is his first long romance. It is a somber study of a human vampire, the Count *Dracula*, who uses beautiful women as his agents and compasses the death of many innocent people. Theophile Gautier essayed the same subject, but his vampire, who was a priest by day and ravening wolf by night, was not half so terrible as this malignant Count with the three beautiful female devils who do his bidding. Nothing in fiction is more powerful than the scene at the killing of the vampire in Lucy's tomb or that other fearful scene at the extinction of the malign power of the Count. The story is told in such a realistic way that one actually accepts its wildest flights of fancy as real facts. It is a superb tour de force, which stamps itself on the memory.

# BEYOND *Dracula*

## STOKER'S OTHER HORROR NOVELS

*The Jewel of  
Seven Stars and  
The Lair of the  
White Worm*



None of Bram Stoker's stories has gained the critical attention or cultural popularity of *Dracula* (1897). His books before it are virtually unknown today, and those after it are hardly household names. Of his other novels, however, two have been of particular interest to modern readers, due especially to various film adaptations.

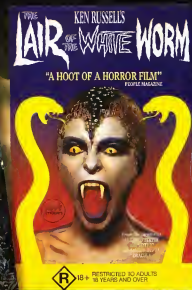
### The Jewel of Seven Stars (1903)

IN *THE JEWEL OF Seven Stars*, Stoker indulges late Victorian society's fascination with Egyptology, an interest he shared. It was a time when both wealthy mavericks and learned academics were journeying east to plunder the ancient treasures of Egypt, and Stoker's story fuses a number of genres—Gothic horror, detective fiction and exotic adventure—to tell the story of one such explorer.

*Jewel* opens in London as barrister Malcolm Ross, the story's closest thing to a romantic hero, is called unexpectedly to the Kensington home of Margaret Trelawny, the object of his affections. Her father, Abel Trelawny, an ageing Egyptologist, has been left unconscious after what appears to be a murder attempt. Soon after Ross's arrival, a policeman discovers a letter addressed to Miss Trelawny, in

which her father instructs her to guard his life if he is ever "suddenly and mysteriously stricken down." None of his Egyptian curios is to be moved, for each has been placed for "a special reason and a special purpose."

There in Abel Trelawny's study, among hundreds of Oriental artefacts, a vigil is held. The tale has begun in the realm of a detective story, à la Sherlock Holmes, with policemen, doctors and lawyers struggling to piece together the clues and solve the mystery. But a series of puzzling incidents take us gradually into the realm of the mystical. When Trelawny eventually wakes from his trance-like state, he reveals his intention to resurrect Tera, an ancient Egyptian queen whose mummy he possesses—and it becomes increasingly clear that Tera in some way possesses Margaret. The goal of Trelawny's lengthy planning, interrupted by an attack by Tera's "familiar," the spirit of a mummified cat, is to bring Tera to life again. The remainder of the book is





concerned with the build-up to and aftermath of this "Great Experiment."

*Jewel* is markedly different from *Dracula*. Where the earlier novel gave us an unambiguously evil villain in the Count, Queen Tera is partly sympathetic; she was unjustly treated in her day, and her resurrection, or reincarnation, is arguably a matter of justice. Margaret becomes her strong—and fellow female—champion. Where in *Dracula*, modern rationality triumphed over the past, in *Jewel*, modern science is impotent against the powers of ancient Egypt, whose knowledge and wisdom Trelawny reveres. In *Dracula*, the Victorians triumph, but in the dark ending of *Jewel*, the Great Experiment fails, and almost all the characters are obliterated. The sole survivor, Ross, knowing that all his companions are dead, can grasp only for cold comfort as he reflects that it was "merciful that I was spared the pain of hoping." There is no relief, no triumph of modernity.

Not long before his death, in 1912, Stoker succumbed to pressure to revise the ending. In the bowdlerized second edition, all survive the Great Experiment, wondering what exactly happened. The new epilogue has Margaret wearing Queen Tera's robes and jewellery, preparing happily to marry Ross. As Carol Senf observes in *Science and Social Science in Bram Stoker's Fiction*, the author effectively turns a tragedy into a comedy (in the classical sense), whether because his view of the world had changed or simply because he needed the money.

*Jewel* is at times a thrilling read, full of adventurous details that wouldn't be out of place in an H Rider Haggard novel. It is also long on exposition at times, and the removal of an entire chapter of long-winded explanation (Chapter XVI: Powers—Old and New) is the one redeeming feature of the second edition.

Most classic movie monsters could trace their lineage to a single, clear literary source, be that Stoker's *Dracula*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The Mummy has never had such uniform ori-

gins, however, with most Mummy films relying on a hotchpotch of different legends and stories, including Stoker's novel and Arthur Conan Doyle's short story *The Ring of Thoth* (1890). *The Jewel of Seven Stars* has, however, received at least four notable direct adaptations.

## The Curse of the Mummy (1970)

FILMED IN THE summer of 1969 and broadcast in the UK on February 23, 1970, as part of ITV's *Mystery and Imagination* series, *The Curse of the Mummy* is the only one of the four versions to retain Stoker's Edwardian setting. Patrick Mower plays Malcolm Ross, here a doctor rather than a lawyer, and Isobel Black, best-known as a teen vampire in Hammer's *The Kiss of the Vampire* (1962), is Margaret Trelawny.



Isobel Black, circa 1970

The production is severely hampered by a visibly low budget. The boom mic frequently drops into the frame, cameras and equipment are often reflected in mirrors, the supposedly dead Queen Tera can't help blinking and breathing (Black reportedly had problems with the makeup, not unlike that of Shirley Eaton in 1964's *Goldfinger*), and the special effects are poor, even for this era in television. When the fumes from Trelawny's relics overcome the characters, for in-

stance—in the novel, we are initially unsure whether this influence is natural or supernatural—the surreal haze is suggested by what appears to be something like a translucent candy wrapper being waved in front of the lens, an effect that is both risible and confusing. Where the novel had flashbacks to Trelawny's Egyptian expeditions and a finale in a Cornish cavern, this adaptation is constrained almost solely to the house, resulting in a very stage-bound feel. Alas, for all its faithfulness to Stoker in the details, these glaring limitations sap the adaptation of any real power.

## Blood From the Mummy's Tomb (1971)

**D**ESPITE A NOTORIOUSLY troubled production history, this contemporary version of the story is also the best. Filming began with Peter Cushing as Professor Julian Fuchs, the renamed Trelawny character, but a day into the shoot, his wife unexpectedly took ill. Cushing quit the film, and Andrew Keir stepped in at short notice. Helen Cushing died soon afterwards. Director Seth Holt also failed to make it to the end of the film: He collapsed and died at home partway through filming, leaving producer Michael Carreras to film the remaining scenes. Unfortunately, Holt's haphazard directorial method had been to plan everything in his head, without making notes, which left Carreras with reams of footage but little idea how Holt intended to assemble them. It's remarkable what a solid film emerged from such a disaster-ridden process, especially considering Carreras's poor record as a director—*Maniac* (1963), *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* (1964) and *Slave Girls* (1966) are among Hammer's flattest films, and it was well-known Carreras didn't care much for the horror genre.

Christopher Wickings's screenplay loosely follows Stoker's plot. Corbeck, Trelawny's colleague in the novel, becomes a villain (James Villiers), vying with Fuchs to resurrect Tera (Valerie



Leon, who also plays Margaret Fuchs) for his own ends. Rather than Fuchs having most of the apparatus for his experiment already, as in the book, he, Margaret and Corbeck are in a race to retrieve the necessary artefacts from those who accompanied them on their Egyptian expedition. Under the influence of Tera, Margaret destroys the owners, who desecrated Tera's tomb, one by one. Malcolm Ross is

renamed Tod Browning, an homage to the director of Universal's *Dracula* (1931), and the character is mainly there for the romance, while being incidental to the main plot.

One element of the novel that comes through especially well in *Blood* is the relationship between Fuchs and his daughter. In the novel, they have been separated most of their lives and only recently reunited; their growing affection for each other is an important part of the story. In this adaptation, while there is no indication of a separation and reunion, there is certainly a very believable bond between father and daughter. Andrew Keir's eyes literally appear to shine as he smiles upon Margaret. This love begins touchingly and morphs into something incestuous as Fuchs's obsession with Tera, for whose spirit his daughter is a vehicle, becomes apparent—this leads David Huckvale, in *Touchstones of the Gothic*, to "speculate that this was why Hammer changed his name from Trelawny ... to Fuchs."

With this theme comes an ambiguity that reflects some of the moral ambiguity of Stoker's story. Corbeck, as Huckvale



Seth Holt (1923–1971)



notes, while having all the external marks of a straightforward villain, is also a reflection, or alter ego, of Fuchs; he shares Fuchs's obsession with Queen Tera but is open about his scheming, voicing the ugly truth that Fuchs dare not express.

## The Awakening (1980)

**W**RITTEN BY ALLAN SCOTT, Chris Bryant and Clive Exton, and directed by Mike Newell—his first theatrical feature film after 15 years in television—*The Awakening* again locates the story in contemporary London and takes the incestuous themes of Hammer's version yet further. Trelawny/Fuchs becomes Matthew Corbeck (Charlton Heston), and at one point daughter Margaret Corbeck (Stephanie Zimbalist) kisses him fully, and seductively, on the lips. As in the novel, they have been separated for most of Margaret's life, in this version because Corbeck's wife (Jill Townsend) left him after his affair with assistant Jane (Susannah York), whom he later marries.

Corbeck's single-minded pursuit of the tomb of Queen Kara (*sic*) keeps him away from the birth of his child, and this, combined with his adultery, makes him an unsavoury and therefore unsympathetic character. This, in turn, makes the first half of the film hard-going, since nei-



ther his lover nor his wife is particularly sympathetic either.

Nevertheless, Heston plays Corbeck's reunion with Margaret quite movingly. She attends his university lecture; he sees her from a distance and is temporarily distracted, but he recovers himself and continues speaking, evidently dismissing his suspicions; Margaret remains at the end of the lecture, and Corbeck, turning round to see her, is lost for words; he gasps, "Margaret?"

There's then a cut to a close-up of Corbeck and his daughter whirling around in each other's arms. Here the reunion immediately becomes less emotionally convincing. It's worth noting, however, the similarity with a scene from Brian De Palma's *Obsession* (1976), in which Michael Courtland (Cliff Robertson) embraces his daughter, Sandra (Genevieve Bujold). This, in turn, echoes the famous hotel scene in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), where the camera encircles Scottie (James Stewart) and Judy/Madeleine (Kim Novak). Bernard Herrmann scored both scenes, incidentally. What the three films have in common is the theme of a man consumed with recovering the past and recreating a lost love.

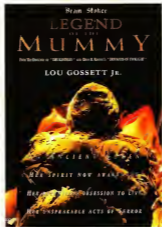
*The Awakening* has impressive credentials, with handsome cinematography by British veteran Jack Cardiff and an ex-

uberant score by Claude Bolling, whose music captures both the horror and the romance of the story. The extensive location photography, in London and Cairo, and the meticulous art direction lend it the most authentic-looking setting to date in a Mummy movie. Unfortunately, even with all these elements in place, the film as a whole falls flat. A plodding pace, inconsistent acting and mostly unsympathetic characters detract from a handful of effective moments.

### Bram Stoker's Legend of the Mummy (1997)

THERE'S LITTLE POSITIVE to be said of this, the worst and most recent of adaptations. Only the barest contours of Stoker's novel are preserved, embellished by gratuitous sex scenes, grisly murders that contribute little to the plot, and a host of poorly written stock characters. Despite the modern-day LA setting, the scriptwriters still find room for a cheeky Cockney henchman, a tough-talking London cop and a timid English housemaid lifted straight out of Victorian times.

Known as *Legend of the Mummy* in the US and *Bram Stoker's Legend of the Mummy* in the UK, undoubtedly a ploy to cash in on the relatively recent *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), the film went straight to video. Two years later,



*Ancient Evil: Scream of the Mummy* was hastily retitled *Bram Stoker's Legend of the Mummy 2*, although it was only vaguely connected to the first film and certainly had no connection to Stoker.

### The Lair of the White Worm (1911)

THE JEWEL of *Seven Stars* portrayed its main female characters in some surprisingly progressive ways, *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911, abridged 1925, then republished as *The Garden of Evil* in 1966) signals a return to full-blown misogyny. Its main female character, Lady Arabella March, is a villainous aristocrat-cum-snake-woman whose sexuality is a



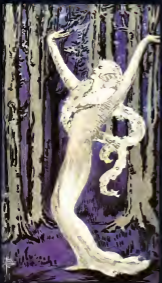
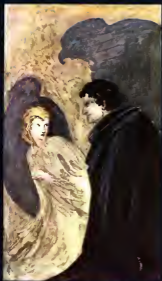
threat that must be destroyed. She is the tempting serpent of the book of Genesis, and hero Adam Salton, in a hardly subtle biblical allusion, is its Adam.

The novel also reflects the inherent racism of the period. It's easy to see why *Lair* is not widely read today, for its depiction of the servant Oolanga is vilely racist. Stoker, as the narrator, refers to the character as "the nigger" a dozen times; the word appears in relation to Oolanga a further dozen times. As a "tropical African savage," his actions are naturally like others of his kind—he is described as vain, untrustworthy, predatory, feral, manipulative and devoid of emotion.

*Lair* begins with the arrival of the

wealthy Adam Salton in Staffordshire, where he has travelled from Australia to meet stay with his grand-uncle. Here Sir Nathaniel de Salis educates young Salton in the area's history and prehistory, including the local legend of the White Worm:

In the dawn of the modern lan-



guage, the word 'worm' had a somewhat different meaning from that in use to-day. It was an adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon 'wyrn', meaning a dragon or snake; or from the Gothic 'waurms', a serpent; or the Icelandic 'ormur', or the German 'wurm.' We gather that it conveyed originally an idea of size and power, not as now in the diminutive of both these meanings. Here legendary history helps us. We have the well-known legend of the 'Worm Well' of Lambton Castle, and that of the 'Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh' near Bamborough. In both these legends the 'worm' was a monster of vast size and power—a veritable dragon or serpent, such as legend attributes to vast fens or quags where there was illimitable room for expansion.

Salton's increasing curiosity, encouraged by Sir Nathaniel (an elderly Van Helsing type), lead him to Diana's Grove, the residence of Lady Arabella March. A sub-plot has another local aristocrat, Edgar Caswall, using mesmerism to get himself a wife, while at the same time, Lady Arabella is intent on wooing Caswall into marriage. The various narrative threads come together—vaguely—at the end, when a bolt of lightning sends electricity through Caswall's kite cord (in his growing madness, he has created an evermore-elaborate kite contraption to scare away an unwanted invasion of birds) and into Diana's Grove, where it ignites dynamite placed there by Salton, and blows the White Worm and her lair to smithereens.

*Lair* is written in what Elizabeth Miller describes as "a jerky and irregular style," which may have been due to Stoker's terminal illness at the time. The plot and its subplots are both erratic and eccentric, and some of the bizarre incidents seem to pass by the characters with little comment. When Mimi, Salton's fiancée, reflects on one particular incident, her bemusement perhaps mirrors that of readers:

It was all very strange. Just fancy how any stranger—say a doctor—would regard her, if she were to

tell him that she had been to a tea-party with an antediluvian monster, and that they had been waited on by up-to-date men-servants.

There is, nonetheless, something quite thrilling, in an almost campy way, about the story. It has received but one big-screen adaptation, and is it surprising that the project attracted that most campy of directors—the late Ken Russell?

## The Lair of the White Worm (1988)

**K**EN RUSSELL ADAPTED Stoker's novel himself for the screenplay to his 1988 film. For obvious reasons, the character of the black servant Oolanga is jettisoned, and it is no loss. Other characters are loosely inspired by those in the book, but none except that of Arabella, renamed Lady Sylvia Marsh (Amanda Donohoe), is transferred directly.

In Russell's version, the nearest character to Adam Salton is Scottish archaeologist Angus Flint (Peter Capaldi), whose interest in the White Worm is stoked by a fossil find that resembles the head of a giant snake or dragon. Lord James D'Ampton resembles Edgar Caswall only in that he is a rich aristocrat, but he is a good man who keeps the local legend of the D'Ampton Worm (a play on "Lambton Worm") alive with a hogmanay-style celebration featuring snake-inspired foods and a folk band that sings a rather catchy ballad on the subject.

The film proceeds with tongue in cheek. In the novel, Stoker's frequent use of snake imagery to describe Lady Arabella lacked subtlety. Wise to this, Russell decides to do the same but plays it for laughs: "I change my cars as regularly as a snake sheds its skin," she quips. After policeman Erny (Paul Brooke) is bitten, Lady Sylvia kindly sucks the wound, then turns towards the camera and takes a tissue to her lips, only to swallow the venom and, with great poise, dab the corner of her mouth. Later, as she casts her Snakes & Ladders board into the hearth,



she quotes *Citizen Kane* (1941), declaring forlornly, "Rosebud." Asked by Lord D'Ampton whether she has children, she replies, "Only when there are no men around." The humour is macabre, bad-taste and very funny.

In a series of surreal fantasy sequences accompanying Lady Sylvia's attacks, Russell treats the story's unavoidable patriarchal and matriarchal themes in the outrageous style for which he is (in) famous. Joseph Lanza sums up Russell's hallmark eccentricity well:

*The Lair of the White Worm*, Russell's drollest film, is one drawn-out phallic parlor game: a guiltless pleasure for those who like their sensationalism with wit. The movie belches out crucifixion nightmares with skewered nuns and rapacious Romans a [sic] vampire seductress whose fangs castrate a Boy Scout and a slithering, carnivorous creature deep in a cave's bowls that waits for sacrificial victims.

## Stoker's Legacy

**A**LTHOUGH *DRACULA* HAD achieved a modicum of success for Stoker's career, it was his association with his employer, actor-manager Henry Irving, that made him most famous in his lifetime. *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* and *The Lair of the White Worm* weren't successful in their day, and they are, for good or bad, curiosities for today's readers, rather than an essential part of the Gothic horror canon. The extraordinary rise of *Dracula* in popular culture has, ironically, placed Bram Stoker permanently in the shadow of the character whom its author said had no shadow.

by David L. Rattigan



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# JUST AS DEADLY



**T**HIS PAST FEBRUARY in Boston, the Stiletto Film Fest presented its second annual collection of horror films directed by women. Stiletto celebrates Women in Horror Month (WiHM), a service of the nonprofit organization Viscera which, according to its website, [www.womeninhorror.com](http://www.womeninhorror.com), "expands opportunities for filmmakers, artists, and fans by raising awareness about the changing roles for women through filmmaking, writing, events, and networking."

WiHM was conjured in 2009 by writer Hannah D Forman (aka Hannah Neurotica, editor of the feminist horror zine *Ax Wounds*) in response to the marginalization of women contributors to the horror genre, and launched in February, 2010.

Inspired by WiHM, actress and filmmaker Megan Sacco created the Stiletto Film Fest with similar intentions, emphasizing that female horror filmmakers deserve more opportunities to prove they are just as good as men.

"I feel like especially in the horror genre, [women] really don't get taken seriously when they're behind the camera," says Ms Sacco. "We're serious. We should be taken seriously and these movies are just as good. And films, just because they have a female name attached to it, shouldn't be dismissed."

In the February 2012 issue of *Fangoria* magazine, editor Chris Alexander responded to reader emails requesting the publication run a feature on Women in Horror Month. His answer was no. His reasoning: "Women should be celebrated as people in this industry and in this world, and should be feted not just in February but all year round, which we do and will continue to do." However, it was

his remarks framing his response that, as he feared, have "select folks releasing their hounds on me." To Women in Horror Month he had written, "Give me a break," and "Eat it."

"I understand where he was trying to go, but he just went about it the wrong way,"

says Susan Adriensen, director of *Under the Raven's Wing*, which screened at Stiletto.

"I think the words 'eat it' were the problem, says *Doll Parts* director Karen Lam. "That was the issue."

Ms Lam believes there's a preconception of Women in Horror Month and the Stiletto Fest as being "sort of self-congratulatory." She points out: "Most of the events are all for charity, and it's not meant to be 'girls rule and boys drool' thing. It's not that sort of thing. We can't account for all the voices that are out there. Maybe some people do think that, and there's some men who are really bothered by this, absolutely. It's a tough industry and it's very complex."

WiHM and Stiletto aim to bring attention to what's happening with women behind the camera. At this year's Stiletto, hosted by Boston's Back Bay Events Center, filmmakers wanted this message to be clear. "Women filmmakers can do the same work as the

says Ms Sacco, "and together we can elevate the horror genre."

She adds: "People think, Oh well, it's horror, so there's boobs. We love the boobs, don't get me wrong. We're not trying to cover up the boobs. That's fine, you know? It's 'We can do that too.' We can show the boobs the same way that the guys can show the boobs, if that makes any kind of sense."

Business can be sketchy behind the scenes, actress Melanie Robel admits. "There are scumbags out there who are like 'Sleep with me to get this role,'" she says. "You deal with that. That's just the business. And sometimes it's tough, I'm not gonna lie."

"I didn't have a problem with the way things were before," say actress Monique Dupree. "I just think [for female actors] it's developing better now. There's more well-rounded characters, not just scream



Melanie Robel

queens. I love being a scream queen. You earn that title. Some characters that bother me are some of the characters I've had to play. But the director pays me and I have to do a job."

Nevertheless, neither actress shies away from being cast in bloody situations. Being covered in blood and guts is where the fun is.

"I like getting down and dirty," says Ms Robel. "Cover me up in blood and I'm there!"

"I love the blood and the gore," says

Ms Dupree. "But if I could change something, I'd like to see women do more films that go back to the classic scare, not just something really gory and nasty that'll give them the shock value. Shock value is different from scare."

The filmmakers also considered the widely held assumption that horror movie spectatorship is predominantly male. As Barbara Creed, Professor of Cinema Studies at the University of Melbourne, put it, "Horror is aimed primarily at the fears and desires of the hetero-masculine psyche" (*The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, 1993).

But what if the predominant audience was female? Would this change what we see on screen?

"I would say that horror filmmaking, at least in the mainstream, whether it's what the studios choose to release and what they're picking up, and often in a lot of the film festivals as well, the perception that it's for, as they call it in quotes, 'for pimply-faced teen boys,'" says Ms Lam via phone. "The dominant audience is not that male. At least the research that we've gotten from Lionsgate and a few industry panels that I've attended is: It actually skews primarily female. We watch a lot of horror."

"Some people will say, 'Ok, we have more women watching now, let's shake this up somehow,'" says Ms Dupree. "I'm not sure that'll happen because every time I think that something's going to go a certain way it never does."

"I think that there's no doubt that the men prefer horror [more than] the ladies [do], for sure," says Ms Adriensen. But she emphasizes that those who make the movies are predominantly male. "It's that filmmakers—there are so few women and we need more opportunities to prove it to this audience. I know that female filmmakers can be just as scary, just as dark, just as sick or if not sicker, than the men."

Ms Lam sums up the situation: "I think the only way things will really change is just



for more women to get behind the camera and for something to break out. Because the only thing that really makes a difference is when you actually have success stories. I think that what really speaks to the film industry is that it's first and foremost a business that happens to make film. You can actually make some changes and make an impact commercially, that's where you get your attention. If you can do something that channels an audience and makes them look at the genre in a different way, that's where your changes come."

by Stephen Slaughter Head



Susan Adriensen

## RAGE

2010, USA, 85 minutes  
 Director: Christopher R. Witherspoon  
 Cast: Rick Crawford, Audrey Walker, Christopher R. Witherspoon  
 www.ragethemovie.net

## Beware a Stolen Parking Space

**J**UDGING FROM ALL the film festival laurels and outrageously positive quotes out there about this feature, I was hoping that *Rage* would blow me away; however, I don't think that I'm the film's target demographic. It would be perfect for a gaggle of teenage boys, but for someone who's expecting more, not so much. I can almost guarantee that all those enthusiastic, eager reviews and quotes are from men. As a woman who has an undying love for horror in all its forms, I wanted to join in the crowd's roar of approval, but I feel a duty to reveal my actual feelings towards the film.

Are you in the mood for a side of rape and a helping of grandma murder by chainsaw with your road rage? Are you a Spielberg fanboy that worships *Duel* like this director does? Go for it. Settle in for a fun, thoughtless evening of PBRs, pizza, and popcorn. Dim the lights and yell at the screen.

Now, don't get me wrong. Christopher R. Witherspoon has a lot of promise. Slow-burning suspense? Love it. Ultra violence? Who doesn't love a good stabbing? However, it takes a master filmmaker to be able to blend the two cinematic styles and moods.

*Rage* starts off in a pleasant-enough suburban neighborhood in Anytown, USA, as Dennis (Rick Crawford) leaves his adoring wife (Audrey Walker) to buy a present for her downtown. His mistake is stealing a parking space from a biker who turns out to have some serious anger management issues. We then see Dennis meeting his mistress, admitting to her that he loves his wife. She threatens to call his wife and asks if his leaving her is the end result of harassment from her crazy, ex-con ex, and of course, it's not; he's just realizing that he's become a pathetic, thirty-something, that should man-up and stop cheating on his sweet lady. Sadly, it's an all-too-common realization.

Since Dennis also believes in karma, he waits for something bad to come to him, and we watch as the biker whose parking spot he stole messes with him in traffic and keys his SUV. And cuts his brake

line. And bloodies him to a pulp in his mechanic's bathroom. And follows him through the city, harasses him in his dream, and follows him home, where Dennis' poor, long-suffering wife is repeatedly punched in the head and raped by this anonymous, invincible biker. Witherspoon wants to create a *Duel* of a new generation—all breathless cat-and-mouse, catch-me-beat-me-let-me-go-find-me-finish-me-or-I'll-finish-you—and it could have been, without the inadequate lighting, relentless oodles of black and white flashbacks, and patently obvious exposition.

Now, Witherspoon is not a talentless hack. He spent time as an FX guy on such genre classics as *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond*, and *Ghoulies*, then went on to pay the bills as a producer and director of commercials before directing his first feature, *Middle Man*, then founding his film production company Big Screen Ventures. *Rage* has won several indie horror film festival awards and his editing is pretty good. The story itself isn't a bad one; after all, who doesn't love to see someone get their comeuppance? It's the crux of Greek tragedy and the reason why *Cops* has been on for so long, and why *1,000 Ways to Die* are so popular. As a former festival programmer, I've actually sweated, bled, and cried to get films to the screens with little-to-no reward, and I understand the plight of the filmmaker.

Besides, I enjoyed watching an inexplicable chainsaw appear out of nowhere and tear screaming into the door of a terrified octogenarian. The film also scores points for trying to rise above what could be a one-dimensional plot. Dennis' wife could have judged him without respite for his awful indiscretions, which indirectly lead to her merciless beating and rape—or she could have stabbed him to death when she had the chance. But like a true partner, she helped this damaged, almost-anti-hero, and ultimately saved him.

So, I think with a bigger budget and bit more experience, Witherspoon could be one to watch. But I'll be doing that from the safety of the East Coast. Thankfully, I sold my car and don't drive too often.

by Michele Galgana



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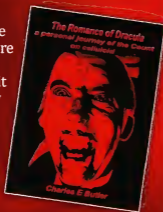
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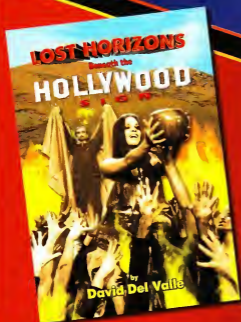
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## Contributors This Issue...



**Paul Murray** is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, he is a writer and diplomat. His publications include biographies of Lafcadio Hearn (*A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lofcadio Hearn*, 1993) and Bram Stoker (*From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker*, 2004). He won the Kolzumi Yakumo Literary Prize in Japan for his Hearn biography. His most recent book, *Nightmore-Touch*, is a selection of the horror writings of Lafcadio Hearn (Tartarus Press, 2010).



**Elizabeth Miller** is Professor Emeritus (English), Memorial University of Newfoundland. Recognized internationally as a leading *Dracula* scholar, she has published several books and has lectured widely at universities and other venues in Canada, the United States, U.K., Ireland, and continental Europe. Her most recent book, co-authored with Dacre Stoker, is *The Lost Journal of Bram Stoker* (2012). For more information, visit [www.blooferland.com].



**Jonathan Rigby** is the author of *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* (2000), *Christopher Lee: The Authorised Screen History* (2001), *Roxys Music: Both Ends Burning* (2005), *American Gothic: Sixty Years of Horror Cinema* (2007) and *Studies in Terror: Landmarks of Horror Cinema* (2011). In 2010 he was series consultant on the three-part BBC documentary *A History of Horror*, and is currently working with Mark Gatiss on a one-off sequel devoted to continental horror.



**Charles E Butler** was born and raised in the Yorkshire town of Leeds, England. He is a writer, actor and independent comic book artist. His own short films, under his Su asti banner are submitted to festivals and have been viewed as far afield as New Orleans. His ebook *The Romance of Dracula* is now available, and a sequel, *Vampires Everywhere: The Rise of the Movie Undead*, is in the works.



**Nigel Wingrove** founded Redemption Films in 1993, following the banning of his short film *Visions of Ecstasy* (1989) on the grounds of blasphemy. Salvation Films and the Redemption label, which was the first to champion the works of Jean Rollin, Jess Franco and European exploitation cinema, is now well established and widely distributed in the USA and UK, as well as online at [www.salvation-films.com](http://www.salvation-films.com)



**Michele 'Izzy' Gargano** is a freelance writer and film festival programmer. She was seduced by the velvety voice of Vincent Price during her toddler years. She has curated films for the Boston Underground Film Festival, Boston Science Fiction Film Festival, All Things Horror Online screening nights, and has written for *Rue Morgue Magazine* and *All Things Horror Online*.



**Aidan Largey** is a film-maker, writer and movie reviewer who spends far too much time watching crime movies, reading comic books and wishing Blaxploitation movies would come back into fashion. He doesn't yet have a website but hopes to get round to it before the zombie apocalypse kicks in.



**Stephen Slaughter Head** was co-editor of the Star Wars website *The Force.net*, co-founder of the much-loved movie news website *IGN FilmForce*, and editor of the movie section at *AOL's Propellor.com*. As a film journalist, he has more than 2,000 published articles at *IGN.com*. His work has also appeared on *AOL.com*, in *Esquire* magazine and the *Boston Phoenix*.



**David L Rattigan** is a British-Canadian freelance writer with interests ranging from religion, film, and language. His published writing includes *Leaving Fundamentalism* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008, ed. G Elijah Dann), and articles for *Third Way* magazine and *The Guardian's Comment is Free* website.

# ICONS of HORROR

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Produced by ANTHONY HINDS Directed by TERENCE FISHER

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Distributed by Rank Film Distributors Ltd.



**T**WILIGHT ISN'T THE first cinematic vampire film to play up the love angle in its marketing by a long shot. Back in 1958 Hammer's *Dracula* was rather brazen in its slogans and imagery, fusing the idea of sex and horror and in the process creating box office gold.

While the American posters played up the vampire aspect—castles, bats, pointy teeth and a couple of scantily clad female forms—the UK took a different tack.

*Dracula* is right of frame, fangs bared (and sporting a likeness to star Christopher Lee, unlike the US version which is more Max Schreck) and holding on to the shoulder of a beautiful female, her white nightie exposing her throat and a healthy expanse of flesh. Dracula's pale complexion and sharp fangs are chilling,

but more so is the fact that his victim is evidently sleeping. The background is black, the absolute dark of the night, from which Dracula literally is emerging, highlighted only by a slight yellow glow behind him—presumably that of a candle light. Dracula may be the Prince of Darkness, but for him to have power he has to be seen.

There is something of a rape element in this image. In our sleep we are at our most vulnerable, unaware of things happening in the world around us. We lull ourselves into a false sense of security, perhaps only woken by night terrors. Here the dreams are personified, and the very real threat is taking advantage of the unwitting slumberer.

The rape scenario is something exacerbated by the slogan on the left hand side of the frame "The TERRIFYING Lover—who died—yet lived!" The juxtaposition of slogan and imagery leaves

the spectator in no uncertainty about the fact that this is a sexual relationship—but also one which is unnatural and frightening. In the lower right corner an additional slogan (presumably for the benefit of impressionable young women) instructs "Don't Dare See It Alone." Perhaps if you do brave it alone there is a real risk that in the dark of the cinema auditorium, Dracula will emerge, lit by the flickering of the projector bulb, and claim you as his latest bride.

So powerful was the image that advertisers would reuse the iconic set-up time and time again—there's even a set of photos from *The Devil Rides Out* that mirrors the *Dracula* scenario almost exactly—except in that instance the victim is fully aware and visibly terrified. Sometimes the strongest terrors are implicit.

RJS

## How you can become a part of *Diabolique* and Horror Unlimited Letters

The editor welcomes correspondence from readers of *Diabolique*. Submissions for the letters page should be emailed to [robert@horrorunlimited.com](mailto:robert@horrorunlimited.com) with 'Letters' in the subject line. All emails will be considered for publication, and may be edited.

Subscribers can also leave feedback via the comments function on the website, and via the new HorrorUnlimited online forum (see [www.horrorunlimited.com](http://www.horrorunlimited.com) for details)

### Submissions

*Diabolique* welcomes unsolicited submissions for publication in the magazine and website. *Diabolique* promises to push our understanding of horror, and is particularly concerned with Gothic film and literature. We will consider submissions that expand our understanding of any aspect of horror, or that deal with seemingly well-worn subjects in a new and interesting way.

In the first instance we recommend you contact the editor with an outline of your proposal, and where appropriate an example of your writing. Full draft submissions are also welcome, and we will promptly acknowledge receipt and advise you whether we wish to take it forward.

Essays should be submitted via email in a Word or Rich Text Format attachment document. Unless previously agreed, your submissions should not have been published elsewhere—either online

or in print. At the time of going to press (March 2011), *Diabolique* does not as a rule pay for articles. A submission to the magazine confirms your willingness to allow a 12 month exclusivity on any article from date of publication.

We at *Diabolique* take issues of plagiarism very seriously. By submitting you also confirm that the material is your own original work, and you indemnify *Diabolique* and Horror Unlimited, the editors and publishers from any loss or expense incurred in the event of legal action arising from any offence.

Whilst not an academic publication, *Diabolique* encourages scholarly practices and approaches to the genre, and as such all sources should be referenced using numbered endnotes. The editor believes in the principles of good historical research, not tabloid journalism! For fuller guidelines please examine the contents of this issue, or email the editor.

Feature articles should be around 3,000 words, though we will consider longer articles by prior arrangement. Shorter articles should be around 1500–2000 words. Reviews should be between 500 and 1000 words. Fiction submissions can be of any length, but submissions over 5000 words may need to be edited or serialised.

All submissions should be accompanied by a short paragraph about the author (see the magazine for examples), and a photograph should be supplied.

*Diabolique* reserves the right to edit any submission to suit the needs of the magazine, including issues of presentation, style, and space. As a rule the authors will be consulted on any matters of alteration or addition, but in the event of a dispute the decision of the editors is final.

### Illustrations

Authors are asked to provide photographs and/or illustrations for their work—including appropriate captions and references—or suggest where they may be obtained. The editors reserve the right to adapt, edit or commission artwork they feel would suit the presentation. Illustrative material should ideally be at 300dpi and sent as jpg or TIFF files.

### Other Media

We are keen to see contributors explore the subject of horror through any means possible. Feel free to submit work in other formats, including illustrations, photography, video and anything else that takes your fancy. Work that cannot be published in the hard-copy magazine will be considered for publication on the Horror Unlimited website.

Please send all submissions and enquiries to the editor (Robert Simpson) at [robert@horrorunlimited.com](mailto:robert@horrorunlimited.com), with 'submission' in the subject line.

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